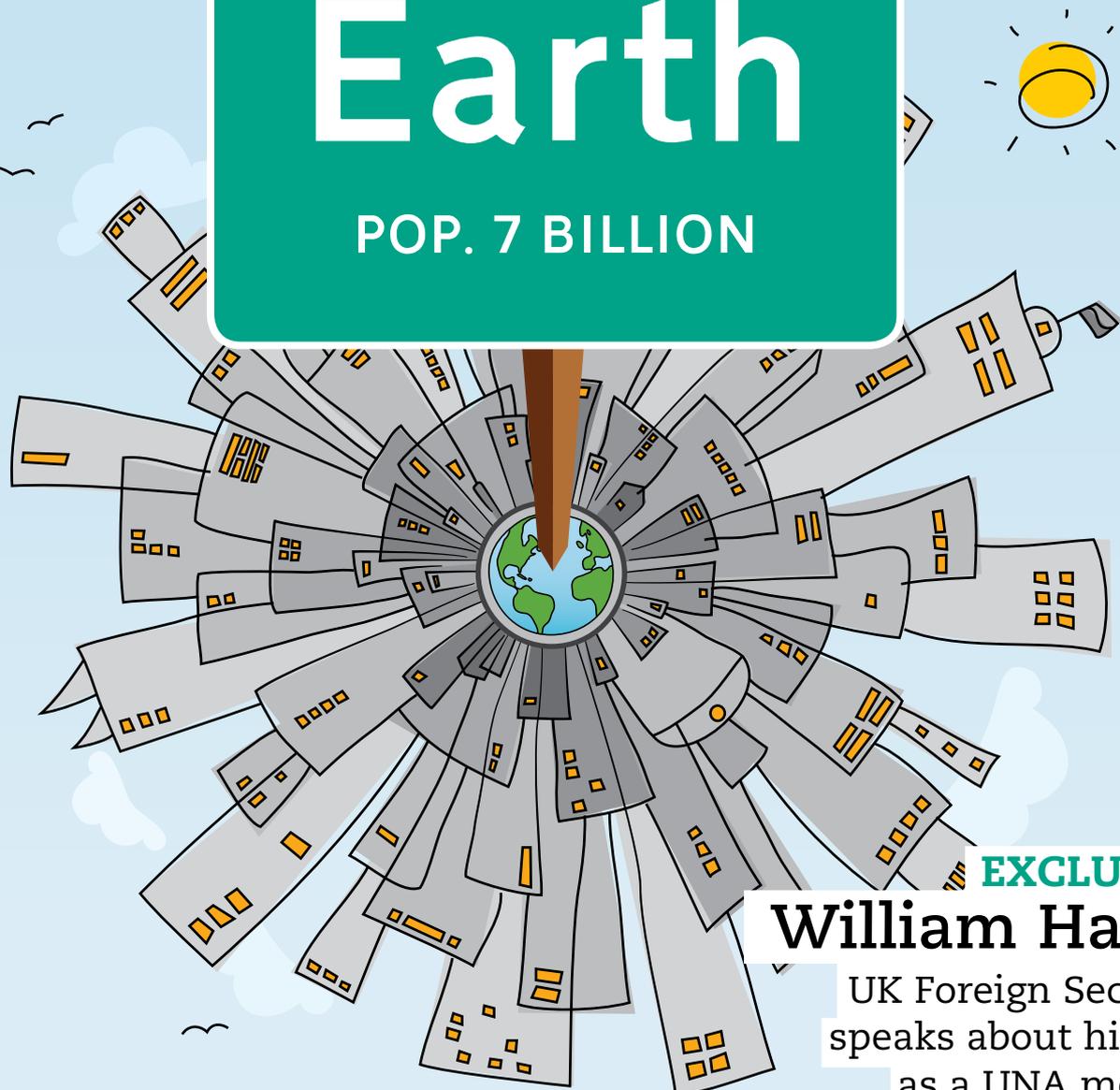


NEW WORLD

Earth

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EXCLUSIVE:
William Hague
UK Foreign Secretary
speaks about his time
as a UNA member
in Wath-on-Dearne



Cancún climate comeback?

page 10



Nuclear view: Des Browne

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Building a global 'Big Society'

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UNA-UK

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FOR THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN FORGOTTEN

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From the Editor

We are delighted to feature in this first 2011 issue of *New World* an essay by William Hague, UK Foreign Secretary, who describes how membership of the UNA-UK branch in Wath-on-Deerne gave him his first taste of international politics (pages 12-13). Reflecting on the challenges facing the UN then and now, Hague writes “a young member of UNA-UK in this country today will still grapple with many of the same issues that preoccupied my peers when I first joined – including the struggle for human rights and political freedom in many parts of the world and how to make the UN more representative and more effective”.

To mark the 60th anniversary of the UN Refugee Agency, Laura Padoan makes the case for mainstreaming refugee concerns in international development efforts (page 9), while Haji Saghir Alam argues that the UN Millennium Development Goals must put more emphasis on persons with disabilities (page 7). On page 8, Abiodun Williams calls for renewed leadership to make the ‘responsibility to protect’ operational, and on page 24, former UK Defence Secretary Des Browne outlines the year ahead for British parliamentary efforts on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. In our cover story, I offer my reflections on global population, due to breach the seven-billion mark later this year.

It is with sadness that we feature our Chairman’s valedictory on page 15. Lord Hannay of Chiswick completes his remarkable five-year term as UNA-UK Chair at the end of January. He has overseen a period of great transformation for UNA-UK and has been a tireless advocate for the UN; while we look forward to working with his successor, Sir Jeremy Greenstock, he will be sorely missed.

New World too is undergoing a transformation. This issue includes some of our new features and launches our online version. Thoughts? Write to me on samarasinghe@una.org.uk.

Natalie Samarasinghe

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Josette Sheeran, head of WFP at UNA-UK youth launch event

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Interview: my year in Haiti
Marianna Franco

p.34

From the archive – 22 years ago

A “people’s fund” for the environment

A proposed UNA campaign on sustainable development and the environment, based on the arguments of the Brundtland Commission Report,



“Our Common Future”, received widespread support at General Council.

We plan to launch it as soon as possible – and have invited the UN Secretary-General to be involved when he visits the United Kingdom in June. It will include parliamentary lobbying, education work and the establishing of a people’s fund for the environment in support of the UN’s work and of our campaign.

We have already helped to produce two working booklets on the Brundtland Report and it is hoped to have a third – concentrating on industrialised country responsibilities – published as soon as possible.

From *New World*, July-August 1988
To read the full article, visit www.una.org.uk/newworld

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Every member of UNA-UK receives a free subscription to New World, containing news and comment on the UN. By joining you will also be invited to take part in campaigns and to attend conferences, seminars and other events.

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- All UNA-UK members can now receive a 50 per cent discount on subscriptions to the prestigious international relations journal 'Foreign Affairs'. Visit www.foreignaffairs.com/unauk to take advantage of this exclusive offer.

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The next issue will cover the period 1 April 2011 to 30 June 2011

All submissions should be typed and sent by email where possible to samarasinghe@una.org.uk. Photos should ideally be 300 dpi resolution

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January

UN Women: operational since 1 January, this new body is headed by former Chilean President Michelle Bachelet and combines the mandates of the four previous UN agencies and offices working on women's rights and gender equality. With increased funding for gender issues, it is hoped UN Women will be able to make the UN's work in this area more effective.

Côte d'Ivoire: the UN called for 2,000 extra troops to bolster its Ivorian peacekeeping mission, where former president Gbagbo's refusal to step down despite his opponent's electoral victory has sparked fears of renewed civil war. On 14 January Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said the UN has 'concrete intelligence' that Gbagbo is inciting violence against peacekeepers and civilians, again raising the prospect of a trial by the International Criminal Court. Days earlier, Gbagbo loyalists had attacked peacekeepers and burned vehicles belonging to the UN force.

Sudan independence vote: Southern Sudan began a week-long independence referendum on 9 January, part of the peace agreement negotiated in 2005 to end over 20 years of civil conflict. Over 22,000 Sudanese and international observers were present. As *New World* went to press, the UN panel tasked with monitoring the referendum said the process had been peaceful and well-organised. It will be several weeks before the final results are known.

Haiti quake anniversary: over a million people – including 380,000 children – are still living in crowded camps and close to two million continue to receive assistance from the World Food Programme, more than a year after a



A resident of the National Tapajos Forest collects wild foliage for preparing a meal.
© UN Photo/Eskinder Debebe

devastating earthquake struck the country on 12 January 2010 (see page 34). At the beginning of the year, the UN and its partners launched a 20-year, \$200 million environmental recovery programme.

UN envoy on sexual violence visits UK:

Margot Wallström, Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, visited the UK on 18-20 January to discuss her mandate and what steps the UK government can take to support it. In early January, Ms Wallström again raised the alarm over rape claims in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) after NGOs reported a New Year's Day attack on 30 women by armed forces in South Kivu. "The use of sexual violence as a weapon or tactic of war, or as a means to wage terror against political opponents, is unacceptable," said Wallström, who has previously described the DRC as "the rape capital of the world". In July-August 2010, over 300 civilians were raped in the space of a few days in the Walikale region of the DRC. (See page 26)

February

International Year of Forests: on 2 February this global campaign will be launched to raise awareness of the threats to forests, and to highlight their vital role in maintaining the global climate and in sustaining millions of people around the world.

Arms Trade Treaty: the first of two preparatory meetings for a 2012 conference on an Arms Trade Treaty will take place at the UN in New York from 28 February to 4 March.

March

World Water Day (22 March): the theme for the 2011 observance will be 'Water for Cities – responding to the urban challenge'. The Day, an initiative which grew out of the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development ('Rio Earth Summit'), will also be one of the key dates in the lead-up to the 2012 'Rio+20' conference.

April

Malaria – end in sight? The eventual eradication of malaria will seem a realistic possibility on 25 April 2011, World Malaria Day. Though some 800,000 people a year still die from the disease, new drugs and innovative vaccines, coupled with traditional methods such as bed nets and a boost in finance, have seen malaria death rates tumble across Africa and Asia.

May

Africa Day (25 May): the continent will be a major focus for UN development, climate change and peace and security activities in 2011, with all campaigns concentrating on the region. During the year, elections will take place in the Central >>

>> African Republic, Chad, the DRC, Egypt, Liberia, Nigeria and Zambia, alongside referendums in South Sudan on independence, and in Zimbabwe on a new constitution.

June

G8 Summit in France

Ten-year HIV/AIDS review: the UN General Assembly will discuss implementation of the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS at the ten-year mark. Figures released in December 2010 showed that the number of new HIV infections and deaths from AIDS-related illnesses are falling globally. But there are still an estimated 33 million HIV-sufferers worldwide, and improved treatments mean people are living longer with the disease, increasing the cost of treatment during their lifetime.

July

UK report on disability convention: the UK is due to report to the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in July 2011 on how implementation of the disability convention has been achieved in Britain. The UK was among the first countries to sign the convention in 2007 but made four reservations to it upon ratification. UNA-UK has called on the government to review these reservations.

August

Somalia: UN support for African Union peacekeepers will continue to be crucial as the mandate of the Transitional Federal Government ends in August 2011.

September

Opening of the UN General Assembly

October

Women and conflict: the UN Secretary-General is expected to propose a framework for implementing UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security during the next decade in October 2011.

UN Day (24 October)

October/November

Day of 7 billion: the birth of the seven billionth person on the planet is due to



Members of the Southern Sudan Referendum Commission unload voting materials delivered via helicopter by the African Union-UN Hybrid Operation in Darfur for the historic self-determination referendum between 9 and 15 January. © UN Photo/Olivier Chassot

be announced by the UN Population Fund (see page 16).

November

G20 Summit in France

November/December

COP-17: the 2011 conference of parties to the UN Framework Convention on

Climate Change will take place from 28 November to 9 December in Durban, South Africa. The UN will aim to build on the agreements at the 2010 conference in Cancún (see page 10), to reduce carbon emissions at the local level and to restore confidence in climate science. Climate change will also be an integral part of the build-up to Rio+20.

December

End of Ban's term: Ban Ki-moon, who was appointed in 2006, will reach the end of his five-year term as UN Secretary-General. At the time *New World* went to press, he had not yet confirmed whether he intends to stand for a second term. Secretaries-General are appointed by the General Assembly on the recommendation of the Security Council, thus making the selection subject to the veto of any of the Council's five permanent members (China, France, Russia, the UK and the US). In theory, a Secretary-General can serve indefinitely though in practice none have held office for more than two terms. The principle of geographic rotation is also practised although it too is not enshrined. ■

New World online

UNA-UK's flagship magazine is now online! In addition to a PDF of the print version, you can now read all the content featured in each issue and access 'web exclusives' on our new micro-site:
www.una.org.uk/new_world

The following Spring 2011 features are only available online:

➤ A lasting Olympic legacy?

Lord Bates calls for a true Olympic Truce in 2012

➤ The Hannay years

Reflecting on Lord Hannay's chairmanship of UNA-UK

➤ UN World Food Programme

Josette Sheeran, head of the UN World Food Programme, speaks to UNA-UK youth (film/audio clips)

➤ Pressure on the LRA – new hope for R2P?

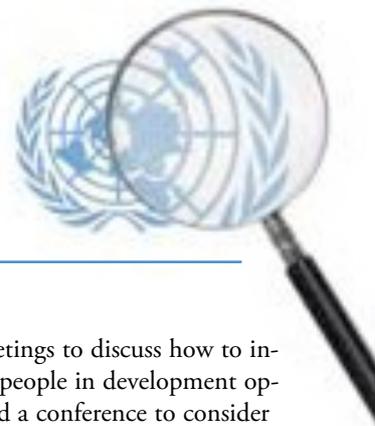
James Kearney, UNA-UK Peace & Security Programme Coordinator

➤ Making the UN Human Rights Council more effective

Natalie Samarasinghe, UNA-UK Head of Policy & Communications

➤ Ten reasons to protect forests

Up-to-date events listings and reports from our members and supporters can also be found at www.una.org.uk/new_world



Making the UN Millennium Development Goals inclusive



Haji Saghir Alam

The UN International Day of Persons with Disabilities was celebrated around the world on 3 December, although in the UK the day remains, for the most part, little known outside the disability sector.

At Action on Disability and Development International (ADD), we took the opportunity to showcase, in partnership with the disability movements in Africa and Asia, the achievements of disabled people and to highlight the barriers that still prevent them from claiming the basic human rights that most of us take for granted – the right to earn a living and raise a family, access to education and healthcare, the right and the ability to vote, and respect from the community they live in.

In the last 25 years that ADD has been working with disabled people in the developing world, there have been many successes. Governments have passed laws protecting and promoting the rights of disabled people, and 96 countries have ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. But as the theme of the recent International Day acknowledged, we now need to make sure that the laws asserting disabled people's rights are implemented.

'Of the estimated 650 million disabled people worldwide, four-fifths live in developing countries and 82% live below the poverty line'

The theme for the 2010 commemoration was 'Keeping the promise: mainstreaming disability in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)'. Disability affects all eight of the MDGs, making it an issue central to the reduction of poverty. Accordingly, ADD and its partner organisations encouraged activities around the world to highlight disabled people's priorities.

In Sudan the government marked the day with a series of high-level political

committee meetings to discuss how to include disabled people in development opportunities, and a conference to consider the role of the media in raising awareness of disability issues.

In Ghana, Tanzania, Uganda and Cambodia, disabled people organised activities ranging from rallies to radio talks, from drama performances to ministerial discussions, to raise awareness of disabled people's rights, participation in the political process, and inclusion in development initiatives.

Bangladesh meanwhile held its sixth National Disability Convention, attended by more than 6,000 disabled people, ministers, parliamentarians, and representatives of local government, civil society, business and the media.

The need for these activities is clear. Of the estimated 650 million disabled people worldwide, four-fifths live in developing countries and 82 per cent live below the poverty line. On the other side of the coin, we know at least 20 per cent of the world's poorest people are disabled.

The links between poverty and disability are well established and the international community has accepted that the MDGs can only be met if disabled people are included in both the design and implementation of efforts to achieve the goals. More sophisticated methods for monitoring the progress of specific groups is also needed.

Beatrice Guzu, executive secretary of the National Organisation of Women with Disabilities in Uganda, describes the situation on the ground: "they endure stigma, discrimination, violence and extreme poverty, but Ugandan women living with disabilities say the greatest challenge facing them centres on their reproductive health. In addition to the impacts of physical, mental, intellectual and sensory impairments, we are double discriminated (against), first as women, and then as disabled." According to Guzu, while women's empowerment and gender equality strategies emphasise the importance of addressing discrimination against women, such strategies do not target women with disabilities. >>



Rubel (centre left) is an enthusiastic student at the Badda Model School in Dhaka. ADD worked with schools, teachers and students to overcome the view that one person expressed as "his terribly burned face will frighten other children and no one will accept him". © Snigdha Zaman

>> The same is true for other groups. Disabled people are regularly excluded from HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment efforts, and estimates indicate that a shocking 98 per cent of disabled children in developing countries are likely not in school, impacting on their ability to earn a living in later life.

Innocent from Burkina Faso is one of the children behind this statistic. He spent his school years locked in a hut because his family did not know how to cope with

his disability. Through a census carried out by one of ADD's partners, Innocent was found when he was 16 and is now slowly integrating into community life.

Like all the Millennium Development Goals, MDG 2 on universal primary education will never be achieved until disabled people are explicitly brought into the equation. Only by making the MDGs inclusive, will stories like Innocent's become a thing of the past. ■

Haji Saghir Alam OBE is Chair of the Trustees of ADD International, a UK-based development agency working with disability movements in Africa and Asia to facilitate disabled people to come together to make decisions about their own lives and to campaign for their rights. To learn more, visit www.add.org.uk

The Responsibility to Protect: leadership required



Abiodun Williams

The Responsibility to Protect (R2P)

is a signal achievement of the twenty-first century. Though its roots can be traced to earlier times, the principle did not mature nor acquire normative significance until the new millennium, and it is now at the centre of the international debate on protecting human beings from genocide, ethnic cleansing, crimes against humanity and war crimes. Leadership at the national, regional and international levels was instrumental in galvanising world leaders to unanimously adopt R2P at the 2005 UN World Summit. And leadership is again required to meet the three main challenges facing the implementation of R2P: conceptual, institutional, and political.

The R2P doctrine was helped substantially by the leadership of former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, who in a speech to UNA-UK in January 2006 called R2P one of his "most precious" achievements. Annan was a norm entrepreneur who considered the protection of human rights to be one of the UN's most important tasks. In the wake of the tragic failures of the international community in Srebrenica and Rwanda, and during the crisis in Kosovo, Annan challenged UN member states to find consensus on the question of international responsibility in

the face of massive human rights violations.

R2P was also spearheaded by some states, notably Canada. The Canadian government's decision to establish the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS) in September 2000, co-chaired by Gareth Evans (then-President of the International Crisis Group) and Mohamed Sahnoun (then-Special Adviser to the UN Secretary-General), was an inspired one. A central achievement of the ICISS report, *The*

'Kofi Annan called R2P one of his "most precious" achievements'

Responsibility to Protect, was that it re-cast the fundamental issue of the intervention debate from a 'right to intervene' to a 'responsibility to protect'.

Regional organisations too played a catalytic role in advancing R2P. Three years before the 2005 World Summit, African states had already embraced the principle in the AU's 2002 Constitutive Act. However, normalising R2P in Africa remains a complex and challenging project. Its potential is constrained by a lack of resources, capacity and strong institutions. On the whole, European governments have been supportive of R2P, and the European Union (EU) has taken a strong positive stance in General Assembly debates. The European Parliament has endorsed the principle in resolutions, and R2P could appear as a priority in the next European Security Strategy. As ever, one of the main challenges for the EU will be unity of purpose across its 27 member states.

The role of civil society in this enterprise must also not be overlooked. NGOs and think tanks involved in conflict prevention, development or human rights work have promoted R2P by contribut-

ing to conceptual debates and through their advocacy work.

Leadership must again flow from all these quarters if R2P is to become operational. This includes conceptual leadership, which involves clarifying the scope of the principle, its objectives, and the means of implementation. Despite basic consensus on the core principles underlying R2P a number of loopholes remain, such as the comprehensiveness of the *responsibility to prevent*, the lack of a formal legal definition of ethnic cleansing, the absence of codified criteria or triggers for specific R2P operations, and confusion about the legal ability of regional organisations to initiate early and flexible responses to crises.

Institutional leadership will be required to create institutional and operational capacity to prevent and halt R2P crimes. Efforts to strengthen operational capacity will need to be complemented with new mechanisms to facilitate coordination and information sharing. Within the UN, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, together with Special Advisers Edward Luck and Francis Deng, will need to assess the existing capacity to implement R2P strategies, suggest solutions to fill the gaps, and enhance partnerships.

However, advancing the R2P agenda ultimately depends on political leadership. It requires political leadership to strengthen the operational capacity within national and international institutions, and meet the remaining conceptual challenges. Without the willingness of political leaders to prioritise civilian protection and allocate resources accordingly, the promise of R2P will not be realised. ■

Dr. Abiodun Williams is Vice President of the Center for Conflict Management, United States Institute of Peace. He served as Director of Strategic Planning for UN Secretaries-General Kofi Annan and Ban Ki-moon from 2001-2007.

Putting refugees on the development agenda



Laura Padoan

2011 is a significant year for refugee protection, marking the 60th anniversary of the 1951 Refugee Convention and the establishment of the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR). The original purpose of the agency was to address the post-World War II refugee situation in Europe. But despite a mandate originally lasting only three years, UNHCR has no prospect of its work coming to an end.

Increasingly intractable conflicts are leading to the creation of seemingly permanent and global refugee crises. Population growth, urbanisation, climate change, water scarcity, and food and energy insecurity are combining in ways that displace people both inside and outside their countries. While many of these issues are recognised in the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), little attention is paid to the relationship between conflict, displacement and development.

Violent conflict has the ability to throw off course the implementation of the MDGs, and most often it is the least of less-developed countries bordering conflict-affected states which shoulder the responsibility for hosting refugees. In 2009, developing countries hosted 80 per cent of the world's refugee popula-

tion. But refugees should not just be seen as a burden. Given access to education and livelihoods, refugees actively contribute to their host societies. Many of the UK's most prominent and successful figures come from refugee backgrounds, including Marks and Spencer founder Michael Marks, Sigmund Freud, singer Mika and the Archbishop of York.

And for those refugees who choose to return to countries which have been torn apart by conflict, poverty reduction and development are essential to achieving durable

'In 2009, developing countries hosted 80% of the world's refugee population'

solutions and stability. In countries where displaced and formerly displaced people make up a substantial part of the population, strategic targeting of development aid can guide the transition from humanitarian relief to attaining the MDGs.

Although none of the eight MDGs deals specifically with refugees, most, if not all, have direct relevance to their plight. Refugees, just like non-refugees, should benefit from poverty eradication, primary education, gender equality and the empowerment of women, and improved maternal health. The prevention of HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases, environmental sustainability and reduced child mortality should also serve to meet the protection needs of refugees.

Combating HIV and AIDS remains a particular policy priority for UNHCR. Around 1.8 million people living with HIV are affected by conflict, disaster or displacement. Approximately 87 per cent of refugees have access to HIV treatment and 75 per cent of pregnant refugee women have access to prevention of mother-to-child HIV transmission programmes when available to surround-

ing host populations. UNHCR's role has recently been reinforced through its appointment as co-lead for HIV issues in emergency response together with the World Food Programme. However, more can be done to combat stigma and discrimination, and to ensure access to prevention and treatment services for people who have been displaced, as well as our staff and their family members.

The promotion of gender equality is another of UNHCR's central objectives. Situations of conflict frequently give rise to violence against women. Militarism aggravates and perpetuates violence, promoting a culture of fear and division that allows violence and aggression to flourish. The impact is disproportionately on women and girls, in particular through their subjection to rape as a weapon of war and other forms of violence. Ten years ago, UNHCR spoke with more than 500 refugee women about their protection situation and as a result of this dialogue, UNHCR made its 'Five Commitments to Refugee Women'. Have we lived up to these commitments? By and large, yes. Individual registration and documentation for women refugees has increased. So too has women's participation in refugee committees and in the management of food and non-food items. Access to sanitary materials has improved, and almost all UNHCR offices have procedures for detecting and responding to sexual and gender-based violence. In the context of the 60th anniversary commemoration activities, UNHCR will be undertaking a new round of regional dialogues focusing on but not limited to women and girls. The first of these has already taken place in New Delhi, with more than 120 refugee women and girls and 70 refugee men from Afghanistan, Myanmar, Somalia and elsewhere participating.

While the MDGs do not specifically address the needs of refugees and internally displaced persons, refugees are a microcosm of the world's population. Clearly, many challenges remain, but the ten-year anniversary of the MDGs and the 60th anniversary of UNHCR should provide governments, the UN and the development community with a renewed commitment to ensuring that the needs of refugees – some of the world's most vulnerable people – are not forgotten. ■

Laura Padoan is External Relations Associate at the UN Refugee Agency London Office.



© UN Photo/Martine Perret

Cancún conference: climate comeback?

In our first 'Talking Points' feature, we outline 'what we got' and 'what we didn't get' from Cancún.

The 16th meeting of the parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in Cancún concluded on 10 December 2010 with sighs of relief. Deft political manoeuvring and drafting had produced a raft of agreements – including on deforestation, finance and monitoring emissions-reduction pledges – endorsed by near consensus. Of the 194 states present, only Bolivia was not in favour of the outcome.

Following the fractious debate at the 2009 conference in Copenhagen, expectations for Cancún had been low, with many seemingly more focussed on restoring faith in the negotiating process than on the future of the existing global climate framework, the Kyoto Protocol, which expires next year.

Under Kyoto, 37 industrialised nations (with the notable exception of the US) took on binding emissions-reduction targets over the period 2008-12, amounting to an average of five per cent against 1990 levels. Developing countries were not set any targets. Instead, Kyoto recognised 'common but differentiated responsibilities' stemming from industrialised nations' overwhelming historical responsibility for carbon dioxide (CO₂) in the atmosphere. More than a decade since Kyoto's adoption, this principle remains central to many developing nations, including India and China, which recently pipped the US to become the world's largest emitter.

In Cancún, both countries shifted their positions in a welcome manner. For the first time, India announced that it would consider taking on emissions cuts under an international mandate. India is the world's third largest emitter and though it lags far behind the

US and China (it produces about five per cent of global CO₂, compared to China's 23 per cent and America's 22 per cent), its demand for energy is rising rapidly. China meanwhile agreed to some independent monitoring of its efforts to reduce emissions. Both nations made non-binding commitments under the Copenhagen Accord, which for all its touted failures, saw the US pledge

'Cancún has done its job ... Governments have given a clear signal that they are headed towards a low-emissions future together'

Christina Figueres, UNFCCC Executive Secretary

a 17 per cent reduction on 2005 levels by 2020, and India and China pledge 20-25 per cent and 40-45 per cent respectively.

The role of conference president Patricia Espinosa, Mexico's Foreign Minister, in securing these commitments was widely praised. In order to avoid the accusations of 'closed-door conspiring' by rich nations which irrevocably damaged the Copenhagen conference, Espinosa asked five pairs of ministers – each consisting of a developing and a rich country representative – to explore compromises in particularly contentious areas. British Climate Secretary Chris Huhne was paired with Brazil's environment minister, Izabella Teixeira. They were asked to bridge the



Greenpeace activists protest in Cancún during the climate change conference.

© Raul Estrella/El Universal via Getty Images

'Kyoto gap' between those countries that insist they will never sign up to a new period of Kyoto targets (such as Japan, Russia and Canada) and those who claim that without a Kyoto extension, there can be no new climate deal (Bolivia, Venezuela, China and several African countries). In the end, the 'Kyoto gap' was not bridged at Cancún. Instead, a cleverly-worded insertion into the text enabled Japan *et al* to adopt it without committing themselves.

These sleights of hand, however, have meant that campaigners' reactions to Cancún have been much more muted than politicians', many of whom ended the conference with standing ovations. While the Cancún Agreements, if honoured, will undoubtedly make a tangible difference, much has been left for this year's meeting in Durban, including the biggest issue of all: a post-2012 global climate framework.

Bolivia reaped much antagonism for its refusal to endorse the outcome. But the UN itself has warned that the actions taken at Cancún fall far short of what is needed to limit global temperature rise to two degrees – the threshold endorsed by the conference. While delegates agreed to seek 'deep cuts', they reiterated the voluntary pledges made in 2009, deferring decisions on binding cuts.

Cancún demonstrated that the UN negotiating process and, for that matter, multilateralism as a whole, is not the obstacle to progress. When countries have the political will, they are able to strike agreements, regardless of how difficult the negotiations may be or in what forum they take place. Whether they can muster enough in time for Durban remains to be seen.



'We are talking about a [combined] reduction in emissions of 13-16%, and what this means is an increase of more than 4 degrees ... a situation that my president has termed ecocide and genocide'

Pablo Solón, Bolivian ambassador to the UN

What we got

- **A set of fully legitimate international agreements.** Unlike the Copenhagen Accord, which was merely 'noted' by the UNFCCC membership, the Cancún Agreements were formally adopted and integrate the Copenhagen pledges into the UNFCCC system, though the pledges are still not binding.
- **Advances in reporting and verification.** Rich countries must report annually on their targets while developing countries should publish biennial progress reports on their pledges. Countries that receive international support for mitigation will be subject to international verification. (Those that fund their own mitigation will not.)
- **Consensus on keeping global temperature rise under 2°C** and a suggestion that the international community should consider lowering this to 1.5°C based on the latest scientific data.
- **A stated goal of reducing rich country emissions by 25-40 per cent** from 1990 levels, and agreement that there should be no gap between the current binding commitments phase and the next.
- **\$100 billion a year in new climate aid** for poor countries, almost doubling aid flows globally. \$30 billion of this is fast-start financing to be delivered in 2010-12.
- **A new mechanism to oversee aid transfers** with guidance on supporting both mitigation and adaptation.
- **The Green Climate Fund** will initially be administered by the World Bank, moving to long-term arrangements after a three-year probationary period. This eventual move was crucial to many developing countries that feel marginalised by the Bank.
- **A framework to reduce deforestation.** Cancún provided guidelines for developing countries to implement REDD+ (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation) – provisions aimed at reducing emissions from forest clearing and other land use changes, which currently make up about one fifth of global emissions.
- **An expanded Clean Development Mechanism (CDM).** CDM currently allows projects in developing countries to receive carbon credits for reducing emissions below a business-as-usual baseline, mostly through renewable energy, energy efficiency and industrial processes. The Cancún Agreements expand eligible projects to include carbon capture and storage.
- **The establishment of a new technology mechanism** to facilitate knowledge sharing and the development of new clean technologies, particularly in developing countries.
- **An Adaptation Committee to help countries assess risks** and create national adaptation strategies. The Cancún Agreements also start a process to investigate the possibility of an international climate risk insurance facility.
- **Without the prospect of new emissions caps, carbon markets could struggle.**
- **Current commitments are projected to reduce CO₂ by just 16 per cent on 1990 levels** according to a recent UN Environment Programme report, instead of the 25-40 per cent envisaged by the Cancún Agreements. Global temperatures, meanwhile, are expected to rise by 4°C this century.
- The headline-grabbing \$100 billion pledge was made at Copenhagen in 2009 and **finances have been slow to emerge.**
- **Decisions on a second phase of binding emissions cuts were deferred**, with several key countries, including Japan and Russia, announcing they were not willing to take on a new set of targets.
- **Verification will be limited** to those schemes financed by international funds.
- **The modalities of verification** – whether it will be carried out by the UN, a group of countries or another body – **have not been specified.**
- **The REDD+ guidance is a framework.** It does not obligate developing countries to implement such initiatives or rich countries to assist them. There is also uncertainty over whether funds can come from corporations buying carbon offsets, and whether forest credits will be accepted as offsets instead of domestic cuts.
- **The pledges by the US and India** made at Copenhagen and reiterated in Cancún **will likely encounter opposition when put before their national legislature.** ■

What we didn't get

- **Progress towards a binding, global climate framework.** Cancún saw a continuation of the move away from international commitments towards domestic or regional commitments.
- **No country increased its Copenhagen targets.** The European



William Hague, UK Foreign Secretary, chairing a UN Security Council meeting on Sudan in November 2010. UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon is on his left and Sir Mark Lyall Grant, UK Ambassador to the UN, sits behind him. © Eskinder Debebe

William Hague, UK Foreign Secretary, speaks about his time as a UNA member in Wath-on-Dearne

Thirty-five years ago membership of the UN Association of the UK gave me my first taste of international politics and foreign policy. As a fifteen-year-old I joined my local UNA branch in the Dearne Valley. Over the next three years I took part in meetings with speakers from all around the world, held in a room above the library in Wath-on-Dearne. It was here that I learnt about China under Chairman Mao and other foreign policy issues of the 1970s and the Cold War era. This was all before the advent of the internet and 24-hour news coverage of international events, which

has brought foreign policy into people's homes as never before. Although I had little thought of one day becoming Foreign Secretary, membership of UNA-UK broadened my horizons and deepened my fascination with politics and world affairs. I became vice-chairman of my local branch before going to university and look back on the experience as formative and memorable.

The world has changed dramatically since the UN's inception more than 65 years ago, and since those days I spent with the UNA branch in Wath. In the years that followed the Berlin Wall fell

and the Cold War ended. The threats we feared then have been replaced by new challenges as well as many new opportunities. International terrorism, climate change and nuclear proliferation have all emerged as major risks of the 21st century. The global distribution of economic and political power has changed beyond recognition. As it tilts towards the new markets and rising powers of the East and South, the nature of foreign policy is changing too.

Nevertheless a young member of UNA-UK in this country today will still grapple with many of the same issues that

preoccupied my peers when I first joined – including the struggle for human rights and political freedom in many parts of the world and how to make the UN more representative and more effective. And it remains the case now, as it was then, that it will be the world's young people who provide the ideas and momentum to address many of these problems in the future.

'A young member of UNA-UK in this country today will still grapple with many of the same issues that preoccupied my peers when I first joined – including the struggle for human rights and political freedom in many parts of the world and how to make the UN more representative and more effective'

Our increasingly networked world has brought exciting new means for young people to be involved in international affairs. In the early days of the internet only a small technical elite could contribute content. But you no longer have to be fluent in the language of computer programming to upload information and ideas. The advent of web 2.0 enabled anyone to make their views known. The internet is truly the first interactive mass communication medium in human history. Social networking and video sharing sites enable people to organise themselves locally and internationally, as we saw over the Gaza Flotilla crisis or the recent student protests here in London. The internet's predominant use of English gives British citizens a particular advantage in taking a leading role in the international debate. Twitter has become an important forum for Foreign Secretaries too – as you will see if you visit @WilliamJHague.

All these things come together in the work of organisations such as UNA-UK, with its mission to raise awareness of the United Nations, advance ideas for its reform and raise nationwide support for peace, development and human rights.

The world would be far poorer without the United Nations. Imagine unchecked conflict without the lifeline of the UN's blue helmets, or raging humanitarian crises without the UN's work to help refugees, broker peace, prevent conflict and alleviate human suffering. Under the UN's auspices we have made significant strides towards the protection of the rights and liberties of every citizen of the world, although there is a still long way

to go. The Millennium Development Goals and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights are two of these landmarks.

But the UN faces dilemmas too. One of these is how to make the UN Security Council more representative of the distribution of global political power. We cannot hope to find international solutions which are legitimate, credible,

binding and fair unless more nations are represented at the table and those who are not feel confident that their views are reflected. That is why Britain supports an expanded Security Council with seats for India, Brazil, Japan, Germany and with African representation, and will continue to push for these reforms to be adopted.

The members of the UN also have to summon the will to hold to account governments that violate human rights. Today, serious and pervasive abuses in Iran and elsewhere often escape the censure of the UN Human Rights Council.

Climate change is another area where UN leadership is indispensable. We welcome the fact that UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has made it his top priority. We need a global climate change deal to shift investment from high to low carbon.

The UN also needs to co-ordinate more effectively on anti-terrorism efforts, as the benefits of increased trade and movements of people can mask the activity of those who use the tools of globalisation to destructive or criminal ends.

We should be realistic in our aspirations. 'The Parliament of Man' dreamt of by Tennyson over two centuries ago may be unobtainable but the UN can and does play a real and unique role in enabling the world to face challenges together. As the baton of responsibility is passed down the generations it is vital that the future effectiveness of the institution is maintained and the gains of the past are preserved. We can help ensure this by encouraging young people to take an interest in world affairs and the work of the UN. Their fresh ideas

Biography

William Hague was appointed Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs on 12 May 2010. He was first elected to Parliament in 1989 and is the Member of Parliament for Richmond (Yorkshire).

The Foreign Secretary was born in Rotherham in 1961, and attended Wath-on-Dearne Comprehensive School. At Magdalen College, Oxford, he was elected President of the Oxford Union. He continued his studies at INSEAD Business School in France, and worked for Shell UK and then for the management consultants, McKinsey and Co.

He has written two books. His first book, a biography of William Pitt the Younger, was published in September 2004 and won 'History Book of the Year' at the National Book Awards. His following book, a biography of William Wilberforce, was published in June 2007.

He is married to Ffion Hague.

Positions held:

- MP for Richmond, Yorkshire, 1989-present
- Parliamentary Private Secretary to Norman Lamont, Chancellor of the Exchequer, 1990-93
- Joint Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at the Department of Social Security, 1993-94
- Minister of State for Social Security and Disabled People, 1994-95
- Secretary of State for Wales, July 1995-May 1997
- Leader of the Conservative Party, June 1997-September 2001
- Shadow Foreign Secretary, December 2005-May 2010
- First Secretary of State, Secretary of State for Foreign & Commonwealth Affairs, May 2010-present

and energy are needed to ensure our international system is equipped for this still new century. That is why I remain an enthusiastic supporter of the work of the UK's UN Association and hope it will go from strength to strength in the future. ■



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Chairman's Valedictory

I am sad to be standing down as

Chair of UNA-UK at the end of January; but term limits are there to be obeyed and not evaded. It has been a busy five years and, I think, broadly positive. UNA-UK has overcome severe financial difficulties and undergone a process of rejuvenation, and is now a respected voice in the dialogue about international developments.

2011 looks set to be a challenging year both for the UN and for UNA-UK. But there are opportunities out there too. The Cancún conference just before Christmas has put the climate change negotiations back on the rails and made some real progress – over deforestation, technology transfer, green investment in developing countries and international monitoring. Now we need to push further towards the goal of lower carbon emissions set in a legally-binding framework; and to rebuild public support for radical measures at the national and European Union level.

As the year opens, the UN faces two major peacekeeping challenges – in Côte d'Ivoire and in Southern Sudan. The UK government needs to be playing a leading role in supporting the UN as it faces up to these challenges; and we at UNA-UK need to be keeping them up to the mark on that.

And the Christmas season brought the welcome news of ratification by the US Senate of the New Start agreement on reductions in US and Russian strategic nuclear weapons. The wider nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation agenda should now be pushed forward vigorously; and we should be pressing the UK government on that too.

I could go on. But then I would be taking up most of this issue of *New World*. Rather, I would like to conclude by thanking all those at UNA-UK who made this revival in the Association's fortunes possible, former Executive Director Sam Daws in particular; and to wish my successor, Sir Jeremy Greenstock, and Executive Director Phil Mulligan and his team, the very best of luck. I will not be giving up on my advocacy of UN causes in Parliament.

Lord Hannay of Chiswick

Chair of UNA-UK

(January 2006 – January 2011)



David Hannay, then-UK Ambassador to the UN, and his US counterpart Madeleine Albright vote at the UN Security Council on 14 April 1995. © Timothy Clary/AFP/Getty Images

Biography

David Hannay was born in London on 28 September 1935 and educated at Winchester College and New College, Oxford. He entered the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in 1959, and was initially posted to Tehran and Kabul. Starting in 1965 and continuing into the early 1970s, he was involved in the negotiations that led to the UK's entry into the European Communities.

During the 1970s he did a four-year spell in the European Commission in Brussels, and was then, after his return to the diplomatic service, involved with energy and Middle Eastern policy. From 1979 to 1983, he was Under-Secretary (European Communities) at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. He was minister at the British Embassy in Washington DC in 1984-5, and was then promoted to ambassador and permanent representative to the European Communities from 1985-90. From 1990 to 1995, he was ambassador and permanent representative to the United Nations.

Following his retirement from the diplomatic service, he was the British Special Representative for Cyprus between 1996 and 2003, and a member of the UN Secretary-General's High-

Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change, which submitted its report in December 2004.

In 2001 he was created a life peer. He was Pro-Chancellor of the University of Birmingham from 2001 to 2006. In 2003 he was made a Companion of Honour. From January 2006 to January 2011 he served as Chair of the Board of UNA-UK. He is succeeded in this position by Sir Jeremy Greenstock, who was also one of his successors as UK ambassador to the UN.

David Hannay continues to serve as Vice-Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on the UN, and Co-Convenor of the APPG on Global Security and Non-Proliferation. UNA-UK will continue to report on his activities in Parliament.

Lord Hannay's most recent UN-related parliamentary appearance:

"Does the Minister not agree that the UN force may need something more muscular than what is available to it in the Côte d'Ivoire now? Does not the experience of Sierra Leone show that having an over-the-horizon capability, which can be provided only by countries with fairly sophisticated military forces, is often the best way of deterring the outbreak of fighting?"

Question in Ivory Coast debate
21 December 2010

Can the world handle 7 billion of us?

In our cover story, the editor reflects on whether population growth really is the defining challenge of the century

The UN estimates that the global population will breach the seven-billion mark this year, peaking at nine billion in 2045. Most of the growth will take place in developing nations, many of them among the world's least-developed countries, and will be concentrated among the poorest populations in urban areas.

Given the deep challenges facing the world – climate change and the food, fuel and financial crises – it is not surprising that this landmark has generated some alarm. The population debate is seldom free from hyperbole, from Thomas Malthus's gloomy predictions in 1798 to Paul Ehrlich's 1968 book 'The Population Bomb'. The modern spectres of resource depletion and slums, coupled with perennial immigration fears, have only added to this sense of a world 'bursting at the seams'.

Population – a smokescreen?

Over half of humanity now lives in cities. The developing world's urban population is growing by an average of five million people every month. Nearly a billion people go hungry each night. 13 per cent of the world's population is without safe drinking water. About half the people in developing regions have no access to adequate sanitation. The world as a teeming slum – the scenario does not seem improbable.

It can be tempting to make the leap from overcrowding to poverty, global warming or conflict. The idea that the world's resources would be under less strain if there were fewer people seems almost intuitive. In an article discussing the 'population explosion' in UNA-UK's magazine in 1959 – when the global population was less than half of what it is today – Sir Herbert Broadley, the UN Children's Fund UK representative, pointed out that it is not so straightforward. Quoting Dr Homi Bhabha of the Tata Institute, he wrote: "the population of the US increases at a rate higher than...in India, but nevertheless the standard of living continues to go up because their productivity rises faster".

Population issues are often poorly understood. Earlier this year, a report by the Institute of Mechanical Engineers, provocatively entitled 'One planet, too many people?', prompted media outlets to conclude that population growth 'is a threat' and 'is not a threat'. Which is correct?

Do we need a global one-child policy?

The Optimum Population Trust, a UK-based think tank, believes that governments should actively encourage people to have fewer children. China and India embarked on national population reduction strategies in the 1970s. In China, where rates were declining before the introduction of the one-child policy, women now average 1.5 children, down from six in 1965. In

India, some states have continued to employ the controversial sterilisation programmes implemented by Indira Gandhi. Andhra Pradesh, for example, offers poor citizens priority housing benefits for undergoing treatment. But Indian birth rates have seen the biggest dip in Kerala, which cites high levels of education among women as the cause.

Globally, the population growth rate has actually been dropping for some time. Fertility is now at 1.4 births per woman, well below the global replacement level (2.3 – the rate needed to maintain a stable population), in 45 rich countries and 28 developing nations, including China. Sub-Saharan Africa is a notable exception, with the average woman giving birth to five children.

The pace of decline has been staggering. Between 1950 and 2000, the average fertility rate in developing countries tumbled from six to three. What took 130 years in the UK, happened in just 20 in South Korea. Countries all over the developing world have slashed their birth rates. Since the 1980s, Iran's and Brazil's have declined by roughly 70 and 50 per cent respectively. Improved living standards, education and family planning have helped this trend. But Hania Zlotnik, Director of the UN Population Division, says: "we still don't understand why fertility has gone down so fast in so many societies, so many cultures and religions. It's just mind-boggling".

This decline, however, will take some time to have effect. We now have the largest generation of adolescents entering childbearing age, including some 1.8 billion young women. Even if they have just two children on average, the global family is set to grow for the next couple of decades as a result of this knock-on effect.

Disaster averted?

Rapid improvements in health care, food production and living standards have seen the world evade the partial extinction predicted by Malthus and Ehrlich. Despite deadly diseases like HIV/AIDS, global pandemics, obesity and pollution, many people are living longer and healthier lives. The result? An ageing population in several regions. In Japan for example, the elderly make up 23 per cent of the population and far outnumber the young. Many rich countries are concerned that increased life expectancy and lower birth rates will create 'pension crises' as they will lack the workforce to support their elderly citizens. Lowering the birth rate could arguably also damage poorer countries. Take Niger: with a child mortality rate of one in five, the birth rate of seven per woman could be seen as an insurance policy.

5 born, 2 die
EVERY
SECOND

The notable exception to this trend is the US. It has a rising birth rate and young workforce due to immigration.

'The World Bank predicts that over a billion people in the developing world will belong to the middle classes in 2030, up from just 400 million in 2005'

2045
9 billion

2025
8 billion

2011
7 billion

1999
6 billion

1987
5 billion

1974
4 billion

1960
3 billion

1930
2 billion

1800
1 billion

Not how many but where

The 2009 UN Human Development Report focussed on migration, arguing that if properly regulated, it can bring huge benefits to both host and origin countries. Sensible laws and policies that enable migrants to go where they are needed are crucial. Rural-to-urban migration and the development of cities will require particular attention.

In 1800, only three per cent of the global population lived in cities. By 2050, the UN Population Fund estimates that 70 per cent of us will live in so-called 'mega-cities' – those with over 10 million inhabitants. 21 such cities exist today, most in developing countries, and water, sewage and housing provision is severely stretched. Dr Tim Jones of Future Agenda says we must build cities to reflect the realities of urban growth. "Sprawl is already being rejected as a deeply inefficient model for growing cities. Hong Kong and Paris are good examples where densities are key to success...just five per cent of Hong Kong's personal income is spent on transportation whereas in Houston it is 20 per cent because everyone drives such huge distances."

Can we feed the billion(s)?

The UN World Food Programme believes that it is possible to feed the current 925 million people who suffer from undernourishment. The problem is one of income, distribution and access. Likewise, the UN Food and Agriculture Organization has concluded that it is possible to produce enough food to feed the growing population, through a combination of smart agricultural planning, investment in seeds and technology, and knowledge-sharing. High-yield seeds and ample fertiliser allow China, for example, to feed its billion-plus people on less than 10 per cent of the earth's arable land.

"In the wildness of speculation it has been suggested that Europe ought to grow its corn in America and devote itself solely to manufacture and commerce," Malthus wrote dismissively at the end of the 18th Century.

In fact, this is largely what has happened.

More emphasis should be placed on policy-driven global agricultural planning rather than market-driven production.

It's how we consume

Ehrlich stands by many of the predictions he made in the 1960s. But he too has changed his tune. Speaking to the *Guardian* in January, he said "you cannot

IS THE WORLD FULL?
The entire global population could live in the US state of Texas, if it were as densely settled as New York City



view consumption and population growth as separate issues. In one sense, it is the consumption that damages our life support system as opposed to the actual number of people expanding."

In terms of lowering carbon emissions, a focus on population growth in the countries with high birth rates would have little impact. It is the rich countries with their small families who use the most energy. Five per cent of the world's population uses nearly a quarter of global energy. One American consumes as much as roughly 250 Ethiopians.

The World Bank predicts that over a billion people in the developing world will belong to the middle classes in 2030, up from just 400 million in 2005. Instead of worrying about their numbers, the focus should be on whether they will consume as much meat as their counterparts in Europe or drive large American-style cars, and what alternatives could be developed.

Changing our habits not breeding patterns

Population growth no doubt puts pressure on poorer countries but it is a factor that exacerbates existing conditions rather than creating them. Curbing population will not by itself lead to the world's resources being shared more equitably or stewarded more prudently. Our efforts should be directed instead at urban development; improving water supply, sanitation and food security, raising living standards; managing migration and moving towards a low-carbon world.

Ehrlich, perhaps surprisingly, gives us reason for optimism. He points out that "we utterly transformed our consumption habits and patterns of economy in the US between 1941 and 1945, and then back again. If you've got the right incentives, you can change patterns of consumption very rapidly." ■

The UN estimates that some 200 million women who would like to use contraceptives lack access to them

Do something: building an international 'Big Society'

The 'Big Society', Prime Minister David Cameron's vision for Britain, has generated countless column inches debating what exactly it entails. Even its fiercest critics realise that as an idea the 'Big Society' could prove to be inspirational. But how does one implement a concept that is based on local innovation, responsibility and enterprise – all bespoke by definition? Perhaps surprisingly, we can look to the UN for global examples of how to 'act local'. While we often speak about building the capacity of individuals and communities in developing countries – indeed, such initiatives are central to drives such as the Millennium Development Goals – we rarely seek to apply the lessons learned to our own societies.

The UN has long had to deal with severe resource constraints. Its core two-year budget for 2010-11 is \$5.2 billion dollars, less than half the cost of the 2012 London Olympics. It employs fewer people globally than McDonald's or Coca Cola. In short, the UN is a far cry from the bloated bureaucracy its critics love to talk about. In order to deliver its expanding development and humanitarian programmes it has needed to adapt and harness the support of a range of actors, including those people at which its programmes are targeted. Consequently, its work on the ground provides a tried-and-tested body of evidence for the 'Big Society'.

How does this work in practice? The UN increasingly acts as a convenor and coordinator, ensuring that communities, NGOs, businesses, governments and international agencies work together by creating the framework for partnerships. One example is the UN Global Compact, a voluntary corporate citizenship initiative that now includes some 6,000 companies in over 130 countries. A member of the Compact, UK-based Unilever has helped the UN to implement HIV/AIDS programmes, such as training peer health counsellors. Deutsche Post DHL meanwhile provides pro bono disaster relief, handling, for instance, the logistics of relief goods as it did in Haiti following the devastating earthquake last year.

NGOs too are valuable UN partners. Much of the World Food Programme's deliveries are now undertaken by national NGOs that understand local sensitivities. NGOs are also increasingly involved in planning interventions, at times leading certain aspects of a humanitarian operation as part of a larger UN team. They participate at the intergovernmental level as well, submitting evidence to UN bodies and lobbying governments. UNA-UK, for example, is proud of the role it played through the Cluster Munitions Coalition in calling for an international treaty banning these weapons.

The UN also works directly with people, be it empowering them through microfinance initiatives, using local radio stations to run literacy programmes or mobile technology to set up medical advice systems. The Jokko Initiative in Senegal is a great example of a partnership between UNICEF, the UN Children's Fund, and a community-development NGO to promote group decision-making in villages. Jokko makes it possible to communicate with a network of people by sending text messages, so everyone from the local nurse to the local imam can inform their community about a UNICEF vaccination drive, or organise a debate on planned construction work. The majority of participants to date are women and girls, drawn to the social empowerment the tool provides. What began, then, as a drive to do more with less has today become an integral part of how the UN operates.

Writing in the *Guardian* last year, Cameron said that the 'Big Society' idea is based on "a profound faith in my fellow human beings and a healthy awareness of the state's limitations". The UN encapsulates both sentiments. Created, according to its founding document, the UN Charter, to prevent war, reaffirm human dignity and promote social progress, what is the UN if not an act of faith in humanity? The rest of the Charter, meanwhile, is an exercise in pragmatism, recognising the limitations of states and of itself. Given that the most pressing issues it needs to tackle – such as climate change – defy national borders and require profound social change, the UN is only too aware of these limitations.

For this reason, UNA-UK and its sister UN associations around the world have been working since the UN's inception to build a peoples' movement for the UN. We believe that in order for the UN to genuinely transform international relations, it must involve those that it is intended to serve, in the opening words of the UN Charter: "we the peoples".

This is why UNA-UK works to inspire people to find out more about the UN and how it relates to our lives. Our latest initiative, Lobby for the UN, launched on UN Day (24 October) aims to foster a national debate on international affairs, focusing in particular on the local, national and global dimensions of sustainable development and nuclear weapons. Our local branches and university groups across the country have been supporting us at a community level, lobbying their MPs, working with schools and fundraising for charitable causes.

As we begin a new year, let us work together to encourage others to be informed and engaged citizens of the world.

Visit www.una.org.uk/lobby to join our campaign



UNA-UK youth members read policy and campaigning materials at the launch event for this year's major UNA-UK youth initiative: action to achieve the UN Millennium Development Goals. Josette Sheeran, Executive Director of the World Food Programme, delivered the keynote speech at this event. Read more on page 32. © UNA-UK/Mark Makela

THE UN & THE UK

This section of the magazine features coverage of UNA-UK's work with government and Parliament, and developments in our main policy programmes: 'Towards Zero' – our flagship nuclear non-proliferation and multilateral disarmament initiative – and other peace and security issues, sustainable development, gender, and human rights and humanitarian action. Further information, news and views can be found online at www.una.org.uk/new_world

Prepared by James Kearney, UNA-UK Peace & Security Programme Coordinator, and Georgina Banks, UNA-UK Executive Assistant and coordinator of the UN All-Party Parliamentary Group (UN APPG)

Making the Human Rights Council more effective

In December 2010, UNA-UK submitted recommendations on improving the functioning of the UN Human Rights Council to the UK Foreign & Commonwealth Office. These include suggestions on increasing support for the UN's independent human rights experts, ensuring that human rights issues in all geographic regions are given due attention, facilitating the participation of developing-country NGOs in country reviews, and instituting tougher criteria for election to the Council.

UN All-Party Parliamentary Group

On 3 November 2010, UNA-UK's Chair and Executive Director briefed the UN All-Party Parliamentary Group (UN APPG) – for which UNA-UK provides the secretariat – on current issues facing the UN, with a focus on the Association's policy priorities for the parliamentary session: nuclear non-proliferation and multilateral disarmament, the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the new UN agency for gender equality and women's empowerment. APPG members were also informed about the types of support, such as briefing notes, research and advice, that UNA-UK can provide.

US and Chinese perspectives on nuclear non-proliferation

As part of UNA-UK's 'Lobby for the UN 2010-11' and 'Towards Zero' initiatives (see pages 18 and 22), the UN APPG co-hosted two meetings with the APPG on Global Security and Non-proliferation. Ambassador Susan

Participants at UNA-UK's high-level roundtable on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation in November 2010 (see page 23). From left to right: Ambassador Susan Burk, Special Representative of the US President for Nuclear Non-proliferation; Guy Roberts, NATO Deputy Assistant Secretary-General for Weapons of Mass Destruction Policy; and Alison Kelly, Director, Disarmament and Non-proliferation, Dept. Foreign Affairs, Ireland. © UNA-UK/Mark Makela



Burk, Special Representative of the US President for Nuclear Non-proliferation, gave a US perspective on 'The Prospects for Nuclear Non-proliferation beyond 2010' (30 November 2010), and Li Hong, Secretary-General of the China Arms Control and Disarmament Association, spoke on 'China's Future Role in Nuclear Non-proliferation' (1 December 2010). UN APPG meetings on the MDGs are planned for spring 2011.

Promoting citizenship in schools

In a letter to the UK Secretary of State for Education (18 October 2010), UNA-UK Chair Lord Hannay of Chiswick urged the government to ensure that citizenship remains a distinct, statutory subject for secondary school children, arguing that it is the only subject "that teaches young people about their rights and responsibilities as citizens." UNA-UK recently joined the Democratic Life coalition, which brings together supporters of citizenship education, including the

Citizenship Foundation and the British Youth Council.

Celebrating the UN's 65th anniversary

The UK Foreign & Commonwealth Office hosted UNA-UK's celebration of the UN's 65th anniversary in October 2010, which featured speeches by Dame Rosalyn Higgins, former President of the International Court of Justice; Professor Sir Adam Roberts, President of the British Academy; Professor Ngaire Woods, Director of the Global Economic Governance Programme at Oxford University; and former UNA-UK Executive Director Sam Daws, who is now directing a project on UN governance and reform at the Oxford Centre for International Studies. Henry Bellingham MP, FCO Minister with responsibility for the UN, delivered the opening remarks, saying "UNA-UK has played a key role in advocating support of the UN. But it has rightly not shied away from challenging it and its member states". ■

Our Chair in Parliament

UNA-UK's Chair, Lord Hannay, has spoken in the House of Lords a number of times since the House returned in October 2010. His contributions include:

➤ Olympic Games 2012: Olympic Truce

"We all know that the cost of successful conflict prevention is a tiny fraction of that of dealing with the conflict once it has broken out, so would it not make very good sense to use the occasion of the London Olympics in 2012 to reinvigorate the international community's efforts at conflict prevention? I hope [that] the Government will give careful thought to ways in which the UN's capacity for conflict prevention could be strengthened, and to how best that could be achieved by making use of the occasion of the London Olympics and the noble and ancient concept of an Olympic Truce. After all, Britain plays an important role still at the United Nations as a permanent member of the Security Council and as a major donor...Can we not put that role to good use and thus make the London Olympics an occasion that will be remembered for more than just sporting achievements?" (11 October 2010)

A letter was also sent to the FCO to this effect, calling on the government to include conflict prevention in the UN General Assembly 'Olympic Truce' resolution the UK will table.

➤ Climate change: IPCC leadership

"Practically all the criticism that has been levelled at the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and other bodies supporting it has been about personalities and process but has not shaken the fundamental case. It would be much better if the critics concentrated on the fundamental case – if they can disprove it, which I do not believe they can – and laid off on the process and the personalities." (25 October 2010)

➤ Burma

"One thing that we could do is to increase our aid projects in Burma to non-governmental organisations and those who work for humanitarian purposes in medical and educational areas. That would be a good way to show that there is an alternative to the sort of regime that Burma has now." (18 November 2010)

➤ UN Security Council composition

"Is the British Government prepared to contemplate an interim step towards reform of the Security Council by having a longer-term category of members who are not yet permanent members – that would make the Security Council more representative – rather than trying endlessly to solve the Rubik's Cube of new permanent members?" (24 November 2010)

➤ Climate change: Cancún conference

"[C]ongratulations on the Government's input into this conference and on the way in which both the previous Government and this Government have refused to be discouraged by the outcome at Copenhagen. I think that that was admirable...On verification, does the Minister not agree that if there is to be a legally-binding agreement, which is, I think, the objective of many, it will be sustainable only if there is a proper international verification process? Will he say whether the European Union could take a lead in the months ahead in shaping up the sort of international verification process that will be necessary if business and the electorates are to have any confidence in this?" (13 December 2010)

Read more at www.una.org.uk/parliament



Join in the conversation

UNA-UK has launched an online toolkit to support the 2010-11 'Lobby for the UN'.

Focussing on our two policy priorities for the year – the UN Millennium Development Goals and nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament – 'Lobby for the UN' aims to encourage UK government action in these areas and to foster dialogue between voters and MPs on UN issues.

The Lobby toolkit contains briefing notes and action points, alongside information on how to lobby local representatives and how to find out more about parliamentary processes. It can be accessed at www.una.org.uk/lobby

If you have already engaged with your local representatives, please let us know. Send copies of your correspondence or reports of meetings to Natalie Samarasinghe, Head of Policy & Communications, on samarasinghe@una.org.uk or by post to UNA-UK, 3 Whitehall Court, London SW1A 2EL.

We will be contacting UNA-UK branches, regions and nations later in the year to find out more about local lobbying activities.



Round-up: signs of hope beyond 2010?

The relatively successful Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference in May 2010 buoyed hopes that the momentum on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation issues would be maintained in the following months. To some extent, it was.

In the UK, the new coalition government revealed, for the first time, the precise number of the country's nuclear warheads, echoing announcements made by the US at the Review Conference. The UK's Strategic Defence and Security Review in October 2010 reiterated its commitment to a nuclear deterrent (the big decision on Trident is to be delayed until 'around 2016') and to Continuous at Sea Deterrence. But it also outlined a number of steps to support multilateral disarmament efforts. These include reducing the number of warheads on board each submarine from 48 to 40, reducing the overall nuclear weapon stockpile to no more than 180, and a Negative Security Assurance – essentially a guarantee to non-nuclear-weapons states not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against them. As with US declaratory policy, unveiled in April 2010 as part of its Nuclear Posture Review, the UK's assurance leaves open the possibility of doing so for countries that are 'not in good standing' with the NPT.

At the Lisbon summit on 19 November, NATO heads adopted a New Strategic Concept. The text expressed NATO's commitment to "seek a safer world for all and to create the conditions

for a world without nuclear weapons in accordance with the goals of the NPT" though it maintained its position that "deterrence, based on an appropriate mix of nuclear and conventional capabilities, remains a core element of our overall strategy."

'Progress will require inclusive diplomacy to push ahead on international efforts to foster nuclear disarmament and counter proliferation'

On 22 November 2010 UNA-UK's Chair, Lord Hannay of Chiswick, contributed to a debate in the House of Lords, asking for clarification from the Leader of the House, Lord Strathclyde, on the government's commitment to working with Russia for the eventual removal of tactical nuclear weapons from Europe. Lord Strathclyde responded subsequently in writing: "the disparity in short-range nuclear weapons between the US and Russia will need to be addressed as we work to create the conditions where further reductions are possible...[the Lisbon declaration] tasked the North Atlantic Council to look at how NATO implements the principles agreed in the Strategic Concept. The review will examine the strategic threats

facing the Alliance and the capabilities NATO needs to meet those threats in the future...the UK will be closely involved in this review and in the forthcoming NATO-Russian Council discussions on short-range nuclear weapons."

Perhaps the biggest victory came on 22 December 2010, when the US Senate ratified the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START), the arms control agreement with Russia, which President Obama personally negotiated with Dmitry Medvedev, his Russian counterpart. The ratification followed domestic and international pressure on undecided senators, including from members of the Top Level Group of UK Parliamentarians for Multilateral Nuclear Disarmament and Non-proliferation who published a letter in *The New York Times* on 1 December calling for START ratification. The group, convened by Lord Browne of Ladyton (who writes in this issue of *New World*, see page 24), wrote: "as clearly stated by NATO leaders at their summit in Lisbon, the security of the UK and the security of its allies, including the US, depends on reducing the threat from nuclear weapons, ballistic defences and improving our relationship with Russia."

If 2010 has been a busy and important year for nuclear issues, 2011 and 2012 should prove just as pivotal. A conference on a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction, proposed for 2012 and agreed by states at the 2010 NPT Review Conference, will have to gain

Towards Zero Roundtable, November 2010

A busy winter for UNA-UK's 'Towards Zero' project culminated in a high-level roundtable held at the Royal Society on 29 November 2010. Entitled 'The prospects for nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation beyond 2010: NATO's New Strategic Concept and the outcome of the NPT Review Conference', and featuring some of the most respected international authorities in the field, it provided a forum for lively debate and discussion on the pressing issues facing us today.

The day's debate was structured around four sessions, each opened with an expert presentation:

1 Countering nuclear proliferation and facilitating a Middle East Nuclear Weapons Free Zone

Alison Kelly, Director, Disarmament and Non-Proliferation, Department of Foreign Affairs, Ireland

2 China's future role in nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation

Li Hong, Secretary-General, China Arms Control and Disarmament Association

3 Sub-strategic nuclear weapons in Europe and NATO's New Strategic Concept

Guy Roberts, NATO Deputy Assistant Secretary-General for Weapons of Mass Destruction Policy

4 The US policy perspective

Ambassador Susan Burk, Special Representative of the President of the United States for Nuclear Non-proliferation

Each area was the subject of energetic and thoughtful discourse. To build on these discussions, UNA-UK has commissioned papers to elaborate on two of the most crucial areas. Once completed, they will be made available to the main UK political parties, policy-makers and UN Associations internationally in advance of a second high-level roundtable due to take place in June 2011. Through such roundtables, UNA-UK seeks to initiate an expert dialogue that can be sustained at the highest levels, by a broad range of parties, nationally and internationally.

"I was pleased to participate in UNA-UK's high-level roundtable. The participants contributed to a constructive discussion of the challenges facing the international community as it pursues this important agenda, and the format contributed to a candid and enlightening discussion." AMBASSADOR BURK

"I found it most stimulating to discuss the hot issues with so many insightful experts. I am also delighted to have the chance to present a Chinese perspective on such issues." LI HONG

"The UNA-UK roundtable was a useful, spirited and stimulating exchange of views among interested experts and professionals grappling with the vision of a world without nuclear weapons in the harsh reality of today's world where proliferation of nuclear weapons continues to be a stark and sobering reality." GUY ROBERTS

"An invaluable opportunity to learn and to reflect upon a number of the key challenges facing the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime in the period ahead." ALISON KELLY

support and momentum quickly if it is to take place. Much will depend on the US, the European Union (EU), China and Russia providing a strong, united front in encouraging Israel and Iran to take part. Iran's uranium enrichment will also be a factor: will it continue its enrichment programme despite international demands? Will it allow thorough inspections by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) of its key nuclear facilities?

On 5 December 2010 this prospect seemed slim. Iran announced that it could now use domestically-mined uranium to produce nuclear fuel, giving the country complete control over a process some in the West suspect is geared toward producing nuclear weapons. But a month

later, Iran surprised many by inviting international representatives (the US was notably excluded) to inspect its nuclear sites. Envoys from Algeria, Cuba, Egypt, Syria and Venezuela were given a tour on 15-16 January but China, Russia and the EU declined. EU foreign representative Baroness Ashton emphasised that it is the role of the IAEA to inspect facilities.

What 2011 will bring for the Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT) also remains to be seen. Obstructions within the UN Conference on Disarmament have crippled movement on the negotiation of a verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons. Pakistan continues to express its apprehension over the proposed treaty, which would call a halt to its produc-

tion of fissile material for warheads, and has complicated proceedings by asking for regional conventional arms control, something India and others have rejected outright.

What is certain is that 2011 will present similar obstacles and opportunities to 2010. Progress will require inclusive diplomacy to push ahead on international efforts to foster nuclear disarmament and counter proliferation. Candid and courageous conversation, of the variety on display at UNA-UK's recent 'Towards Zero' roundtable (see box), will be required to avoid the mire of inaction. ■

UNA-UK will continue to report on developments and to strive to influence the agenda in the UK and other key states.



Des Browne, then-UK Secretary of State for Defence, meets UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon in New York in 2007. © UN Photo/Mark Garten

Des Browne, former British Defence Secretary, on the Top Level Group of UK Parliamentarians for Multilateral Nuclear Disarmament and Non-proliferation

Not so long ago, advocates of nuclear disarmament were comparatively rare in mainstream politics, particularly in the UK. The accepted wisdom was that such policy was inconsistent with strong defence and its advocates inevitably were unelectable. This has changed. Nuclear disarmament is firmly back on the agenda and is being advocated by some of the world's most influential figures.

Almost two decades since the end of the Cold War, there are still nearly 21,000 nuclear warheads in the arsenals of eight states across the world. Large quantities of fissile material with the potential to be converted into more war-

heads are also held in their stockpiles. In a world where those destructive materials are sought by rogue states and terrorists, furthering nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament, and improving the security of nuclear materials is more important than ever.

When the States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) met in 2000 they agreed that this challenge could not be overcome by half measures. They concluded that “total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only absolute guarantee against the[ir] use or threat of use”.

Since then, progress on implementing these words has been slow. However, over the last two years, important steps have been taken in both non-proliferation and nuclear security and a steady stream of politicians, leading statesmen, senior military and civil society representatives have called for nuclear disarmament in the context of non-proliferation and nuclear security challenges. First, in January 2007, there was the Wall Street Journal op-ed by American statesmen George Shultz, Henry Kissinger, Sam Nunn and William Perry. Then, the ‘UK four’, Malcolm Rifkind, David Owen, Douglas Hurd and George Robertson, wrote in *The Times* of

the need to work multilaterally towards nuclear disarmament. This was followed by the creation of Global Zero, a grouping of over 100 political, business, civic and military leaders campaigning to eliminate nuclear weapons. In April 2009 in Prague, US President Barack Obama set as a goal a world without nuclear weapons and that summer, then-UK Prime Minister Gordon Brown released his 'Roadmap to 2010'. This ambition was made international through UN Security Council Resolution 1887 in 2009, the Nuclear Security Summit, a successful NPT review conference in May 2010, and a plethora of encouraging initiatives and statements by decision-makers.

In the UK, a cross-party group of mainstream Parliamentarians, inspired by the US example and building on the 'UK four' initiative, has formed. This Top Level Group (TLG) – comprising former military chiefs of defence staff, several former foreign and defence secretaries, a former NATO Secretary-General and other prominent senior Parliamentarians, 21 in total – shares the vision of a world free of nuclear weapons and wants to help achieve that objective. In *The Times* op-ed, the 'UK four' pointed out that any nuclear disarmament initiative could only succeed "by working collectively and through multilateral institutions". The TLG agrees with that analysis and has set itself the task of doing just that, from a UK base.

The Group's first priority is to make a consistent contribution to the debate in the UK. There is no doubt in my mind that the existence of the TLG helped create the environment in which the significant nuclear disarmament announcement that was the Strategic Defence and Security Review was accepted without any controversy by Parliament and the political classes when it was announced on 18 October 2010.

The second principal objective is to ensure that the UK mainstream political voice is heard in the US corridors of power. For example, Group members have been in constant dialogue with US senators to encourage the ratification of the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty with Russia. My own experience is that if we do not speak for ourselves in Washington DC, then others will misrepresent our position. The distinctive nature of the TLG is such that it has strong links and a credible voice in that arena.

The third and final element of our initial strategy is acting as a catalyst for the development of a European Leadership Network (ELN) of like-minded politi-

cians, which has proceeded at a pace surprising even to us. There are a number of reasons for that. Principal among them, however, is that the European political environment was ready for it. Many senior European politicians and statesmen just needed to be asked, not persuaded. Although it is counter-intuitive to many that European leadership should be driven from London, our initiative across Europe has been met with enthusiasm.

'There is no doubt in my mind that the existence of the Top Level Group helped create the environment in which the significant nuclear disarmament announcement that was the Strategic Defence and Security Review was accepted without any controversy by Parliament'

2010 was considered a year of progress. 2011 must not be a disappointment. The TLG and the developing ELN have set themselves a challenging agenda for the coming year. When we meet together as the ELN on 25 January in London, we will begin to address that agenda with a wide-ranging discussion about NATO's nuclear weapons policy in the light of the recently revised Strategic Concept and in anticipation of the expected Review of Deterrence announced at the Lisbon Summit.

Later in the year, we will move on to audit the contribution of European institutions to nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament, engage in a trans-European debate on NATO-Russia relations, and make a contribution to the fulfilment of our obligation to convene a conference on a weapons-of-mass-destruction-free zone in the Middle East that has arisen from the NPT review action list.

I am honoured to convene the Top Level Group, and working beyond Parliament with NGOs and other arms control organisations has been a highlight of my time in this office. In closing, I want to pay tribute to the work

New UNA-UK chair to participate in BASIC Trident Commission

Sir Jeremy Greenstock, incoming Chair of UNA-UK, is to participate in the BASIC Trident Commission. Created by BASIC – the British American Security Information Council – the Commission will bring together senior political, military, diplomatic, scientific, and academic figures to conduct the most rigorous and credible examination of UK nuclear weapons policy ever conducted outside government.

It will be co-chaired by Lord Browne of Ladyton, former Labour Secretary of State for Defence; Sir Malcolm Rifkind, former Conservative Defence and Foreign Secretary; and Sir Menzies Campbell, former leader of the Liberal Democrats and Shadow Foreign Secretary.

The Commission, which will launch on 9 February at Portcullis House in Westminster, will conduct research, host events and receive evidence throughout 2011. A final report is due to be published in early 2012.

www.basicint.org

of Lord Hannay of Chiswick, both in his capacity as the Chair of UNA-UK and as Co-Convenor of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Global Security and Non-Proliferation. He has made a characteristically effective and indispensable contribution to informing this debate. In particular, he has led a programme of events in Parliament that have exposed Parliamentarians and their staff to the world's leading thinkers on these matters. I am enormously grateful to him for his support and encouragement. ■

Lord (Des) Browne of Ladyton is convenor of the Top-Level Group of UK Parliamentarians for Multilateral Nuclear Disarmament and Non-proliferation, and former UK Secretary of State for Defence

LETTERS



Send your letters to:

Natalie Samarasinghe, UNA-UK,
3 Whitehall Court, London SW1A 2EL
email: samarasinghe@una.org.uk

This letter was sent to Margot Wallström, Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, with a copy to the Editor. Her reply is included below.

Dear Ms Wallström,

As members of the UNA Isle of Man, we are writing to express our concern about the treatment of women in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). Many international groups are reporting that thousands of women are being raped and gang raped by Congolese soldiers in the east of the DRC, that rape is being used as a weapon of terror in the war there, and although women's groups in the Congo have been appealing to the UN Security Council for many years, no help seems to be forthcoming. Indeed it is reported that although a UN peacekeeping group was able to provide an escort for a commercial truck to pass through one area safely, no intervention has been made on behalf of women. It appears that rape, terror and kidnapping are all being used as war tactics.

30 years since the Convention on the Elimination of all Discrimination Against Women entered into force, it is time for the UN to take more positive action to make sure that women are protected.

Yours sincerely,
Reverend David Shirtliff
Isle of Man

Dear Reverend David Shirtliff,

I very much appreciate you taking the time to write to the UN regarding the situation of women in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon recognised the grave situation of women in the Congo and in other conflict areas where women are being systematically raped as a weapon of war. In an effort to ramp up the UN response, I have been appointed as the first Special Representative of the Secretary-

General on Sexual Violence in Conflict. Since my appointment in February of this year, I have twice visited the Congo to assess the situation, hear first-hand accounts, and gather information on how best to address the atrocities through my mandate. For a full account of my second visit, please see my statement to the UN Security Council on 14 October 2010 (available from www.securitycouncilreport.org).

My small but dedicated team is working very hard to end the impunity of perpetrators, deliver justice in the form of reparations and services to victims, protect and empower women as the foundation of prevention, and ensure that women are included in all measures taken on their behalf. With those goals in mind I have not only travelled to the Congo in the last year but also to Liberia and Bosnia to speak to the women and communities that have been affected, NGOs working for and with these communities, and UN field actors. These trips have greatly guided my work at the UN headquarters in New York, where my team is designing a new monitoring and reporting system to track sexual violence in conflict areas and make sure that any instances are immediately known to the government in question and the Security Council. We are also working on developing early warning indicators for sexual violence so that when a community is in danger of acts of sexual violence as a weapon of war, local, national, and international actors can immediately respond and prevent the situation from escalating. The two briefings that I gave to the Secretary-General and the Security Council on the state of sexual violence in the countries I visited serve to foster their understanding of the issue and motivate action from the UN system as a whole.

In November 2010, I attended the opening of the first international criminal justice case against crimes of sexual violence in war, the Jean-Pierre Bemba trial at the International Criminal Court. The trial gives voice to more than 1,200 victims of the Central African Republic who

have applied to participate despite the appearance of just one perpetrator. The fact that these crimes are deemed grave enough to constitute the focus of an international prosecution is a message of hope to the victims. It tells them that their lives matter. It also tells the parties to conflict that respecting women's rights – even in the midst of war – is an obligation, not an aspiration. It is my hope that beyond the courtroom, this trial will inspire a global conversation aimed at replacing the vicious cycle of silence and impunity, with a virtuous cycle of recognition, justice and repatriation in the Central African Republic, the DRC and elsewhere.

Thank you again for writing. I take my mandate very seriously and care deeply about improving the UN response to preventing sexual violence and protecting victims. While I was in the Congo, I heard women say: "A dead rat is worth more than the body of a woman." It is my hope that you will continue to raise awareness and decry these crimes against humanity occurring in the DRC through the use of your own platforms and connections in the Congo, the Isle of Man, and internationally. For advocacy efforts, you may find the website that my team has put together helpful:
www.stoprapenow.org

Respectfully yours,
Margot Wallström
Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict

Dear Editor,

I was amused by the 1957 UNA-UK pamphlet 'United Nations News' reproduced in the last New World (Feature: Queen Elizabeth, Autumn 2010): under-resourced UN operations, the Secretary-General struggling to glean more than warm words from member states, aggression from North Korea, the debate over a permanent UN police force... Her Majesty is not the only one to have endured these past few decades!

William Banks
Manchester

Dear Editor,

The dawn of the new millennium was accompanied, it seemed, by global optimism. Now, as we enter a new decade, there appears to be a sense of apprehen-

sion – unsurprising, perhaps, given the vast array of problems facing humanity: climate change, international terrorism, intra-state conflicts, the spectre of economic and financial meltdown, not to mention the increases in global population.

Determined efforts must be made to address these challenges in the only way possible: through multilateral solutions and robust international laws and systems for enforcement. The UN should be at the centre of this approach.

In my opinion there has never been a point in time, since the creation of the UN, where the need for this Organisation has been greater. Under the leadership of Ban Ki-moon, the UN must rise to the need and be pro-active in tackling all these challenges and in fulfilling its crucial role.

Member states too must step up. We must remind our national representatives of the opening line of the UN Charter: “We the Peoples of the United Nations *determined...*” They should listen to the voices of their peoples, and be more truly united and determined to address these challenges.

David J Thomas
Porthcawl

Dear Editor,

I was very moved by the story and commitment of Setsuko Thurlow (Opinion, Autumn 2010) – to have witnessed a catastrophe like Hiroshima at such a young age, and to be brave enough to share this experience for the greater good of a world without nuclear weapons – such dignity and grace are both rare and inspirational.

Sheila Barnes
London

Dear Editor,

I am writing on behalf of the Trustees of the UNA Trust to express our warm appreciation to all those who gave to the Trust in 2010.

The Trust is entirely funded by donations and legacies and we are most grateful for the generosity of UNA-UK members. Your gifts enable us to continue educating the public on the work of the UN, and to nurture a new generation of globally-minded citizens.

Rod Fielding
Chair of The UNA Trust

Resources



Join in the

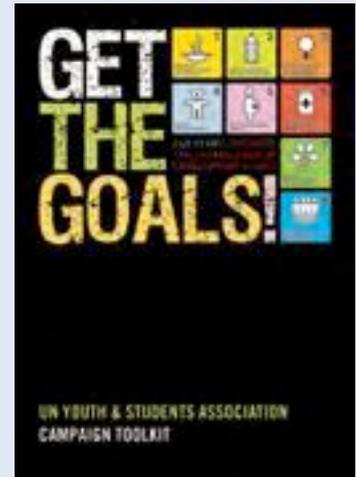
'Lobby for the UN' toolkit:
Developed to support UNA-UK's 2010-11 'Lobby for the UN' campaign (see pages 18 and 21), the toolkit includes:

- tips on how to lobby effectively as an individual or part of a local group
- information on Parliament, devolved administrations and local authorities
- details of free training on parliamentary business and processes
- briefing notes on UNA-UK's two policy priorities for the year: the UN Millennium Development Goals and nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament

Available from www.una.org.uk/lobby

'Get the Goals' UNYSA campaign pack

UNA-UK's youth wing has released a campaign pack to support its 2010-11 'Get the Goals' initiative (see page 32).



Available from www.una.org.uk/youth



UN International Days

UNA-UK has teamed up with the UK National Commission for UNESCO to develop a series of activity sheets for primary and secondary schools to celebrate UN international days. To date the following sheets have been published, with more coming online soon: UN Day, Universal Children's Day, World AIDS Day, International Day for the Abolition of Slavery and Human Rights Day.

Available from
www.una.org.uk/education



UN Forum highlights

This short film showcases highlights from UNA-UK's biggest event of 2010, UN Forum, including previously unseen 'vox pops' from participants and speakers.

Available from
www.una.org.uk/UNForum2010

All resources are available for free download from the UNA-UK website. If you do not have access to the internet, please contact our Membership Officer, Rich Nelmes, on 020 7766 3456 or membership@una.org.uk

Grassroots inspiration

This section of New World will continue to feature inspiring stories from our members, UNA-UK news and views, and updates on flagship activities. For up-to-date information on membership events around the UK, and the latest comments and articles from our members, please visit our online event calendar and members' forum. You can also subscribe for free to our monthly UNA-UK, youth and young professionals e-newsletters.

We the Peoples: the film festival strikes back

The UN's 'three pillars of freedom' – freedom from want; freedom from fear; and the freedom to live in dignity were the principal themes of the 2010 We the Peoples Film Festival. Organised by the UNA Westminster branch and now in its fifth year, the festival remains a highlight in the UNA calendar.

Held from 22 November to 2 December last year, the festival sought to mark the UN's international themes for 2010: biodiversity, the rapprochement of cultures and youth. Working closely with UNA youth and student groups, the branch hosted screenings – most followed

by panel discussions – in seven university campuses as well as the Riverside Studios and St. Ethelburga's Reconciliation Centre.

Attracting over 300 people, one of the main events was 'Young Film-Makers Day' at the National Film Theatre. Festival organisers worked with NGOs, youth groups and industry professionals to put together a multi-activity programme using three cinemas to screen films made by young film-makers from the UK and around the world. Workshops offered expert guidance on how to make documentaries and there were live video 'link-ups' with young film-makers from the Bayerebon School, Ghana and from Soweto, South Africa.



We the Peoples: winning films

• BEST FILM IN FESTIVAL

(also winner of 'rapprochement of cultures' category)

– **Winner:** Paradiso

– **Director:** Alessandro Negrini (Northern Ireland)

A colourful musical journey following a group of elderly musicians in Derry who decide to challenge the 'fear of the other' by getting together after 40 years to organise a big night in their old dance hall, inviting their old enemies.

Alessandro Negrini was present to receive his award in person.

www.bbc.co.uk/northernireland/tv/programmes/paradiso

• FREEDOM FROM WANT CATEGORY

– **Winner:** Casta Nano

– **Director:** Jaime Otero (Spain)

India's new middle class is burgeoning, but alongside dreams and aspirations there is also pollution, anarchy and poverty.

The award was presented by Prince Mohsin Ali Khan, Vice-President,

UNA Westminster branch, to the director who flew in from Spain.

www.promofest.org/en/films/casta-nano-the-new-indian-middle-class

• FREEDOM FROM FEAR CATEGORY

– **Winner:** The Team

– **Director:** Uduak Isong Oguamonom (Kenya)

Following the devastating post-election violence in Kenya in 2008, this TV series depicts a football team with its own tribal, ethnic and social dimensions. The successful formula has now been copied in several African countries.

The award was presented by Rahwa Kiros, Director of the Addis Ababa Film Festival, and received by Lawrence Kershen QC, Search for Common Ground UK, whose US partner financed this initiative together with the UK Department for International Development.

www.sfcg.org/programmes/cgp/the-team.html

• FREEDOM TO LIVE IN DIGNITY CATEGORY

– **Winner:** No Sharp Objects

– **Director:** Johan Eriksson (UN Relief and Works Agency)

Fifteen 15-year-old boys who have never left Gaza embark on a remarkable journey to the US. They return having made friends and gained a new perspective on the world.

The award was presented by Vivienne Eka, UNA Westminster branch, to the director who was travelling through London from Norway to UNRWA in Jerusalem.



Still from 'Under Rich Earth'

• THE ENVIRONMENT CATEGORY

– **Winner:** Under Rich Earth

– **Director:** Malcolm Rogge (Canada)

Ignored by the government and the police, Ecuadorian farmers facing eviction due to a mining project face down armed paramilitaries – a poignant tale of hope and determination.

The award was accepted by David Wardrop, UNA Westminster branch, on behalf of the director.

<http://underrichearth.ryecinema.com>

• YOUNG FILM MAKER CATEGORY

– **Winner:** War School

– **Director:** Ben Newman

Awards were made to the winning three young film-makers and included authoritative guides on making film documentaries.

The film made by the Soweto youngsters, Wembley to Soweto, was screened simultaneously in both locations, followed by a live discussion and joint project planning.

Later that evening, the winners of the first ever We the Peoples film awards were announced. Categories covered development, human security, human rights, the environment, the rapprochement of cultures and youth. Winning directors flew in from Spain, Norway and Northern Ireland to receive their awards, some staying on to attend the screenings of their films. The category winners are listed on page 28 and on the festival website: www.wethepeoples.org.uk.

David Wardrop, Chairman of UNA Westminster branch, who contributed this article, commended everyone who worked on the festival, saying: "we are so lucky to have such brilliant volunteers from UNA and UNYSA branches and elsewhere to curate screenings, assess submissions, write copy, update the website and so on. Our warm thanks also go to the British Universities Television and Video Council for funding the awards, and to Sainsbury's and the Institute of Development Studies for their contribution to the success of the awards ceremony. Now we must choose a name for our 2011 awards and I invite UNA members to suggest one".

Edinburgh discusses NATO Strategic Concept

120 people attended UNA Edinburgh's one-day conference on 'The New NATO Strategic Concept and Global Zero'. Sponsored by Malcolm Chisholm MSP, the event was held on 1 November 2010 at the Scottish Parliament, and was chaired by Dr Gari Donn, convenor of UNA Edinburgh.

Expert speakers included Lord Hannay of Chiswick, Chair of UNA-UK; Ambassador Kim Traavik, Embassy of Norway; Dana Linnet, Principal Officer, US Consulate, Scotland; Dr. Rebecca Johnson, Executive Director, Acronym Institute; and Lord Browne of Ladyton, convenor of the Top Level Group of UK Parliamentarians for Multilateral Nuclear Non-proliferation and disarmament (see page 24).

The conference provided a unique opportunity for discussions on the future of NATO and global disarmament efforts. A report of the conference findings is available from www.edinburghuna.org and was distributed widely, including to all



Harpenden inspired by 'peace art'

UNA Harpenden branch set up a peace art competition as part of its UN day of peace (21 September) celebration. Organised with local primary school children, the celebration also featured poems, readings and songs performed by groups from different schools. The branch offered prizes for art submissions under the theme 'what peace means to me', and selected some of the paintings to use for the branch Christmas cards. This picture by Aimee Gorman, a 10-year-old pupil at Grove Junior School, was one of them.

MSPs, to NATO and to UN Associations internationally.

Model UNers in Lancaster call for a world without nuclear weapons

On 7 December 2010, some 20 sixth formers participated in a Model UN Security Council conference in Kendal, organised by the UNA South Lakeland & Lancaster City branch. Students took part in a lively debate on nuclear issues, culminating in a resolution that reaffirmed the aim of a world without nuclear weapons and called on the US and Russia to reduce their ballistic missile capability by half.

The debate was chaired by former Mayor of Kendal John Bateson. Two students from Queen Elizabeth School, representing Mexico, won 'best team performance', while William White, from Lancaster Royal Grammar School, took the 'best individual speaker' prize for his role as the Permanent Representative of Austria.

Luckshan Abeysuriya, branch secretary, said "it was a very important day for the students who have spent months

rehearsing their speeches and researching what their countries think about nuclear disarmament. With Trident missile submarines being built in Barrow, it was a very topical issue and one which the students engaged with to a very high standard. The UN wants to hear the views of young people (see page 33) and we will now send the outcome of their meeting to the UN in New York."

25 years of Liverpool MUNGAs

Enid Lodge, secretary of the UNA Liverpool branch, has been working to engage young people in the UN's work for over two decades. On 19 November 2010, she organised her 25th Model UN General Assembly, at which students from schools across the region debated peace, development, human rights and environmental issues.

Over the years, some 5,000 sixth-form pupils have benefitted from Enid's MUNGAs, gleaning a taste of international diplomacy and learning skills such as research, negotiation and public speaking. The first event was held in 1985 in a lecture hall in St Katherine's



Enid Lodge (third from right) and her husband posing with a 2007 MUNGA delegation from Sri Lanka. The exchange was arranged by UNA-UK member Fiona Gow (second from right). © UNA Liverpool branch

Teacher Training College, with students from Liverpool. Since then, more and more schools have been drawn to these annual events, with delegations from Knowsley, St Helen's, Sefton and Wirral now in regular attendance. The lecture hall has been replaced by the Town Hall and Council Chamber, after Enid

persuaded the City of Liverpool to give students the experience of real debate. She has also been assiduous in finding sources of funding for the conferences, with the UNA Trust, Liverpool Hope University and the Liverpool Schools' Parliament supporting the MUNGAs in recent years.

Councillor Hazel Williams, Lord Mayor of Liverpool, who opened the 2010 conference, presented Enid with a red Lamb Banana and a citation to mark her achievements in the past quarter of a century. Based on a sculpture by Japanese Artist Taro Chiezo commissioned by the city of Liverpool, the Lamb Banana is one of the city's most recognisable and popular symbols.

In addition to MUNGAs, Enid has initiated a range of projects to foster global citizenship, including visits to the European Parliament and the UN Office in Geneva, and a film production funded in part by the UNA Trust, which saw students from the UK travel to Benin to learn more about Liverpool's and Benin's slave trade history. Produced in collaboration with the UK National Commission for UNESCO and Anti-Slavery International, the film is entitled 'Following Equiano' – a freed slave – and can be viewed at www.una.org.uk/MembersForum

Enid continues to be an active member of UNA-UK and of Liverpool UNESCO Associated Schools. She is currently working on a follow-up film called 'Who cares about human rights?' with pupils in Italy, Sweden and the UK.

A Tribute to Dr Dorothy Eagleson, 1923–2010

Dorothy Eagleson grew up in Belfast in a family that took a keen interest in her education. The Second World War spanned her student days in the Sixth form at Richmond Lodge School and her undergraduate life in Queen's University, which she entered already of confident and independent mind.

Dorothy trained as a Youth Officer but quickly realised that many adults who had earlier foregone an education were asking for advice on gaining qualifications, careers guidance and improving literacy and numeracy skills. She recognised the need to provide adults with a range of services wider than that set up for young people and in 1967 she established the Educational Guidance Service for Adults. This pioneering work extended beyond Northern Ireland and Dorothy was later a founder member, and the first President, of the National Association for Educational Guidance for Adults.

A member of UNA Belfast branch for over 60 years and its Executive Committee for over 50 years, Dorothy served as both Membership Secretary and Honorary Secretary. She carried her interest into the other organisations she belonged to, encouraging Soroptimist International and the Queen's Women's Graduate Association in their support of charities involved in international development work. She set a high value on her work on behalf of the UNA-UK membership and actively participated in the local branches of UNIFEM and the UNESCO Club. For many years she was the main organiser of an annual UN Day event in Belfast which included all the UN organisations represented in the city.

Dorothy's valuable contribution to promoting worldwide affairs within Northern Ireland will be sadly missed.

Judith Fawcett

UNA Northern Ireland Representative to the UNA-UK Board



© UNA Belfast branch

Dates for the diary



UNA-UK 'roadshows' – help us plan our strategy!

As UNA-UK is approaching the end of the period for its current strategic objectives, the Board of Directors decided, at its meeting on 27 November 2010, to begin developing a new strategic plan to cover the period July 2011 to June 2015.

While the ultimate responsibility for adopting a new strategic plan rests with the Board, it is important that UNA-UK members are involved in its development. Building on the meetings that UNA-UK Executive Director Phil Mulligan has already held with a number of branches and regions, the Board approved his proposal to hold a series of 'road shows' around the country during the first quarter of 2011 to help generate ideas for the new plan.

Each road show event will have two key purposes:

- 1 To present to the membership initial ideas on our vision, mission and approach
- 2 To work with members on generating ideas on potential areas of policy focus

The format of each event will be a presentation by UNA-UK Executive Director Phil Mulligan, followed by an interactive

discussion on potential areas of policy focus. Each event will last approximately two hours.

Any member of UNA-UK can attend a road show event. Invitations will be sent to each UNA nation/region/branch and any UNYSA branches in the area, and we hope that as many members as possible take part in these events. Venues are being sourced by the nations/regions.

If you are a member and are not able to attend one of the roadshows, you can send us your views by completing a feedback form, available on request by contacting membership@una.org.uk or 020 7766 3456. Completed forms should be returned no later than 28 February.

DATES

- **3 February:** Northern Ireland
- **12 February:** Scotland
- **15 February:** London & Southeast
- **23 February:** Central Counties
- **26 February:** Southern Counties
- **5 March:** Eastern
- **12 March:** Wales

UNA-UK Annual General Meeting

The AGM of UNA-UK will take place on 4.30pm at 10 March 2011 in The Eastwood Room, The Farmers Club, 3 Whitehall Court, London SW1A 2EL.

All paid-up members of UNA-UK are welcome to attend and should have received the AGM notice, minutes of the last meeting and financial summary with this issue of New World. If you are a member and have not received the AGM documents, or if you are unable to attend and would like to submit a proxy voting form, please visit www.una.org.uk/AGM2011.html or contact Carol Hodson on hodson@una.org.uk or 020 7766 3455.

UNA-UK 65th policy conference in Cardiff

We are delighted to announce that the next UNA-UK policy-making conference will take place on Saturday 18 June 2011 at the Temple of Peace in Cardiff. Prior to the conference, on Friday 17 June, members have the option to take part in a host of workshops, and to join UNA-UK's new Chair, Sir Jeremy Greenstock, and Executive Director, Phil Mulligan, for a buffet dinner and the ever-popular UN quiz. A draft of UNA-UK's new strategic plan will also be presented. On 18 June, motions submitted by the membership will be debated in plenary sessions and policy commissions.

All members should have received the following enclosures with this issue of New World: a letter of invitation from Kate Grady, Chair of Conference, a conference booking form and a provisional programme. If you have not received this documentation, please contact Rich Nelmes, UNA-UK Membership Officer, on membership@una.org.uk or 020 7766 3456.

Please refer to the enclosed documents and UNA-UK's Objects & Rules for details on submitting motions. These are available from www.una.org.uk/conference2011 or by contacting Rich Nelmes using the above details.

CONFERENCE POLICY-MAKING TIMETABLE:

15 April 2011

Deadline for submission of policy issues and domestic motions

6 May 2011

Deadline for Preliminary Agenda to be sent out

20 May 2011

Deadline for submission of comments/amendments to the agenda

10 June 2011

Deadline for Final Agenda to be circulated, though this will likely be sent out considerably earlier.

17 June 2011

Optional pre-conference events

18 June 2011

Conference in Temple of Peace

2010/11 'Outreach Grants'

As part of our current membership drive, UNA-UK is delighted to announce that it has again established a fund to help branches, regions and nations organise activities around the UK.

Grants of £100-£400 are available for events that will take place before 30 June 2011. Applications must be received by 31 March 2011. Full details are available from Carol Hodson, Deputy Director (Finance and Governance), on hodson@una.org.uk or 020 7766 3455.



Panel discussion at UNA-UK's youth campaign launch in November 2010. From left to right: Annah O'Akwana (UNA-UK Youth Council), Andrea Paltzer (UN World Food Programme UK office), Imogen Martineau (UN Environment Programme), Janos Tisovszky (UN Regional Information Centre, Brussels) and Mitali Nikore (UNA-UK Youth Council)

UNYSA gets the goals

350 students and members of UNA-UK's youth wing, the UN Youth & Students Association (UNYSA), crammed into the Institute of Education on 23 November 2010 for UNYSA's campaign launch event. Entitled 'Get the Goals', UNYSA's campaign for this academic year focusses on the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

At the event, keynote speaker Josette Sheeran, head of the UN World Food Programme, spoke passionately about her organisation's efforts in helping to meet MDG 1 – eradicating extreme poverty and hunger. The event also featured a lively panel discussion with Janos Tisovszky (UN Regional Information Centre), Imogen Martineau (UN Environment Programme) and Andrea Paltzer (WFP UK office), who answered students' questions on the MDGs and working for the UN.

Globally, one person in seven does not get enough food to be healthy. Hunger and malnutrition continue to be the number one risk to health worldwide – greater than AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis combined – even though there is enough food in the world today for everyone to have the nourishment they need. International efforts on

MDG 1 have yielded substantial results, with east and south-east Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, and north Africa on track to halve the proportion of hungry people by 2015. But sub-Saharan Africa and south Asia still have a long way to go. When people are

Praising UNYSA's initiative, Josette Sheeran said "I was impressed by the enormous enthusiasm among students for reaching the first MDG – what I call the 'gateway goal' because it affects all the others"

hungry, all other development activities are thwarted – they can concentrate on little other than their next meal – so achieving Goal 1 is vital for the achievement of all MDGs.

UNYSA's 'Get the Goals' campaign aims to equip young people in the UK and abroad to take action. A brand new toolkit, produced for the campaign and presented at the launch event, contains a progress report and 'future forecast' for each goal, along with practical ideas on what young people can do to raise awareness of the MDGs and lobby decision-

makers. It also includes some frequently asked questions on the goals, and reflections on criticisms levelled against the MDG initiative – for example – that the goals do not adequately measure the progress of certain vulnerable groups, such as the elderly or persons with disabilities.

Praising UNYSA's initiative, Josette Sheeran said "I was impressed by the enormous enthusiasm among students for reaching the first MDG – what I call the 'gateway goal' because it affects all the others. I really believe your generation is the generation to end hunger. This is possible; this is not something that is a dream without possibility. It doesn't require new scientific breakthroughs. In fact, nation after nation has been defeating hunger."

You can download the 'Get the Goals' toolkit and view videos and photos of the event at www.una.org.uk/youth

Over the next few months, the UNYSA Youth Council will be scaling up its Model UN activities, starting with the re-development of UNA-UK's MUN portal (www.una.org.uk/mun) and the creation of a UK school and university MUN database. Do you know of a MUN society or conference that is not yet affiliated to UNA-UK? If so, please contact Rich Nelmes, UNA-UK Membership Officer, on membership@una.org.uk

Young people challenge the UN Security Council to do more

“What does peace and security mean in the 21st Century? What about human security?” asks Emma from the UK. Hani from Lebanon wants to know “if a dispute was to originate in one generation between two nations, how is it that the same dispute ignites a war nearly 50 years after?” Jelena from Serbia and Alexander from Kenya are worried about the lack of sustainable energy sources and conflict over resources, while Bashir from Yemen and Gloria from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) say all they want is peace.

These are some of the concerns raised by young people participating in the first UN Security Council youth event on 21 December 2010. To mark the International Year of Youth (August 2010-August 2011), the US Mission of the UN, which held the Council presidency in December, invited young people from around the world to submit their thoughts on the question ‘what is the

most vital challenge to peace and security facing your generation?’

Over 900 entries from 90 countries were received via email, post, Facebook and YouTube, including several from UNYSA members in the UK. Questions were also put directly to the Security Council by young people from states currently represented on the Council. Susan Rice, US Ambassador to the UN, who chaired the session, said “you have a stake in our debates every day, but today you and your generation will have a voice as well”.

In their submissions, UNYSA members focussed on issues ranging from ethnic cleansing and violence against women to the changing nature of conflict and threats to international peace stemming from poverty, climate change, resource scarcity and terrorism in all its forms, including cyber-terrorism – themes that were echoed by young people from around the world. Several entries, from war-torn and peaceful countries, concentrated on the dire consequences of conflict for young people, for example, in the DRC, the Middle East and Somalia. The selection process for submissions to be screened at the event was not without controversy: France vetoed the screening of a German submission on nuclear disarmament while African Council mem-



Young people participate in a UN Security Council youth event entitled ‘Your world, your future: voices of a new generation’.
©UN Photo/Paulo Filgueiras

bers blocked a video about the Lord’s Resistance Army, claiming it reinforced negative African stereotypes.

Regardless of whether they came from rich or developing countries, or from those aged 13 or 21, the overall message was clear: young people long for sustainable peace and believe that the best way to achieve this is by ensuring the next generation is healthy, educated and has a secure environment in which to develop. 17-year-old Fabiola Estrada from Venezuela summed it up best. In a powerful video submission, she called on Security Council members to “stop financing war [and] instead of it, finance our future’, urging them to exchange a weapon for a smile.

During the event, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon spoke movingly about his own youth. “I, too, grew up in war. I, too, saw my village destroyed. The United Nations helped rebuild my country. It shaped my life.” Like Fabiola, he focussed on sustainable development as a precondition for peace, noting that “every year, the world spends \$1.4 trillion on weapons. With a fraction of that we could cut poverty, fund schools, provide health care and protect the environment”. Just one year of global military spending could cover the UN’s budget for 732 years. Ban concluded by saying “young people don’t just want talk. At the recent climate change conference in Cancún, a 17-year-old girl wore a t-shirt that read: you have been negotiating my whole life – don’t tell me you need more time”. Over to you, world leaders. ■



Josette Sheeran, Executive Director of the UN World Food Programme, speaking at UNA-UK’s youth campaign launch event ©UNA-UK/Mark Makela

THE YPN INTERVIEW:

NAME: Marianna Franco

JOB: Programme Development Manager, ACTED

PLACE OF WORK: Port-au-Prince, Haiti

YPN MEMBER SINCE: 2010

Marianna and a colleague make friends during a field visit to Dashti Shor, Afghanistan © Marianna Franco, 2007



What do you do at ACTED?

During my four-and-a-half years at the NGO ACTED (Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development) I have had the chance to take on different positions in several countries. After an internship at the Paris headquarters, I began my first field position in Afghanistan, starting as a Reporting Officer and later becoming

Reporting Manager, producing project proposals and reports for donors and developing communications strategies. At the end of my two-year assignment there, I was sent to India as Team Leader of ACTED's emergency response to the 2008 floods in Bihar. I spent a year in the Middle East as Regional Programme Development Manager, serving in Jordan, Palestine, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq and Yemen.

On 13 January 2010, on return from an exploratory mission in Yemen, where thousands of people had been caught up in fighting between government troops and Al Houti forces, I received a call asking me to go on an emergency support mission to Haiti, which had just suffered a devastating earthquake. I reached Port-au-Prince ten days later and am still based there as Programme Development Manager, liaising with the UN, NGOs and the donor community, and developing ACTED's emergency interventions and longer-term recovery activities. In March I will be rejoining the Paris headquarters to oversee all ACTED's countries with a focus on linking emergencies to reconstruction and then development.

Wow. That's some four-and-a-half years. What motivates you to keep going?

When you work for such a dynamic NGO you are exposed to new challenges on a daily basis and your professional growth is incredible. ACTED is very much field-based and relies heavily on young motivated professionals, so your opinions are taken into account by senior managers and, providing you demonstrate you can achieve your targets in a qualitative way, you are given the opportunity to set your own goals.

What qualification or experience do you think most helped you to get where you are?

My background in international relations, humanitarian law and human rights has certainly been an asset, as have research and analytical writing skills. And continuing education (long distance) on more specific skills, such as managing emergency operations, enabled me to change roles more easily within the organisation.

Yet, the 'skill' that I have found the most useful so far has been, without doubt, curiosity! Whether it is exploring contexts, problems and solutions; listening to people's needs and ideas; or establishing links with different stakeholders; being passionately curious is what continues to drive my personal and professional development in the humanitarian field.

Which posting have you found the most challenging/rewarding?

A difficult question! Each setting was unique, and challenging and rewarding at the same time. Working in the field is an incredibly enriching experience. But it can be overwhelming, especially in remote and/or insecure areas which call for strict security protocols. Emergency contexts are highly intense, personally and professionally, 24 hours a day, and you need to be ready as keeping a more or less balanced life is very challenging indeed!

How would you summarise your year in Haiti?

The first two months were incredibly tough: long working hours in precarious conditions, an extremely complex operating environment and massive urgent needs to respond to. ACTED has been present in Haiti since 2004 but our earthquake emergency response required a substantial scale up, operationally and structurally. It was an interesting process to be part of and when my support mission came to an end, I felt too committed to leave and requested a permanent assignment.

My main objective was to contribute to the development of an intervention strategy flexible enough to adapt to the changing context and to ensure that a pertinent response was given to evolving needs. We started with emergency distributions of food and non-food items; we then ensured access to water and sanitation facilities and provided quick income-generating opportunities to the most vulnerable people. As ACTED is committed to both relief and development, strategic discussions quickly turned to long-term reconstruction efforts whilst simultaneously planning for shorter-term needs, such as preparing for the cyclone season.

2010 has certainly not been a kind year to Haiti. October saw a new emergency – a cholera epidemic – spread through the country. A couple of weeks later, Hurricane Tomas struck, threatening the 1.2 million Haitians still living in tents. The year ended with protests and barricades following the disputed elections, which we feared could hinder NGO access to vulnerable communities.

Being an aid worker in post-earthquake Haiti is possibly my most difficult assignment to date – my commitment was pushed to the limit. 'Macro' needs being met with 'micro' solutions make you question humanitarian operations as a whole and your role as an individual within them. But despite all its ups and downs, this year has been one of the most interesting experiences I have had so far. I have finally found my answers to these questions and believe there is still a lot I could do within this field. ■

ACTED (Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development) is a non-governmental organisation that supports vulnerable populations affected by war, natural disasters and/or economic and social crises. www.acted.org

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UNA-UK

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